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# CELEBRATED DUNCES.

BY

TOM BROWN,

AUTHOR OF

"A YEAR AT SCHOOL," "THE PHILOSOPHER IN THE PLAYGROUND,"  
"RALPH WINTER'S WOOING," "BEN BARLOW'S BUDGET."

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TO

SAMUEL SMILES, Esq.,

WHOSE BIOGRAPHICAL WORKS HAVE BEEN

A DELIGHT AND AN INSPIRATION

TO THE YOUTHFUL READERS OF THIS GENERATION;

AND BY WHOSE REMARKS ON

"ILLUSTRIOUS DUNCES" IN HIS DESERVEDLY POPULAR "SELF-HELP"

THE FOLLOWING SKETCHES WERE ORIGINALLY SUGGESTED;

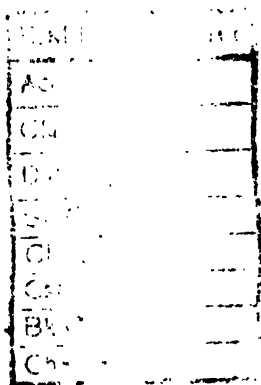
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## CELEBRATED DUNCES.

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### INTRODUCTORY PAPER.

**W**HO that remembers the old dame schools of twenty or thirty years ago does not also remember the tall, sugarloaf, cardboard structure with which the naughty or stupid scholar was punished and disgraced. No matter whether the scholar had been inattentive, idle, obstinate, or actually dull, in most cases the punishment was the same; the culprit was dubbed a dunce, crowned with the hateful symbol of stupidity, and set up on high for the ridicule of the rest of the children, who enjoyed the confusion of their school-fellow all the more from the lively remembrance of their own feelings when in a similar disgrace.

And not only was the name of dunce given indiscriminately to all classes of offenders, but the obnoxious cap was often put upon the head of some perfectly innocent school-boy, while the real offender escaped scot free. Physically and mentally short-sighted as many of the old schoolmasters and schoolmistresses were, vindictive and imperious as were nearly all of them in the many revolts and insurrections against their injudicious rule, they constantly



pounced upon the wrong individual, and then, too proud to admit their error, refused to listen to one word of explanation or excuse from the culprit who was undergoing the humiliation of the dunce's cap. Many a lad was thus made to smart under a sense of injustice, and to feel the agony of unmerited disgrace, while his good intentions were overpowered by the punishment; and, despairing of fair treatment, the unfortunate youth settled down, discouraged and defiant, into a careless obstinate fellow, taking disgrace and chastisement as a mere matter of course.

Dunces' caps, like the school system with which they were so closely associated, have now become things of the past. Let us hope that, together with the merciless ferules and stinging canes with which the old pensioner style of schoolmaster loved to correct his scholars, they are now only to be found in old lumber-rooms and on the top shelves of out-of-the-way cupboards, almost buried in the dust of disuse and antiquity. But though the caps themselves have disappeared, the disgrace, of which they were only the outward symbol, is still as common as ever, and there is still danger at times of industrious, plodding, painstaking lads becoming discouraged and disheartened by being designated dunces.

Indeed, it seems to me that in the present day there is even greater danger than formerly of lads being styled dunces who really do not merit that title. We live in an age of competition, and since in the busy world men have to compete with their fellow-men, it is only right that boys at school should get accustomed to measuring their capacities and attainments alongside their school-fellows. But perfectly right and proper as this system of competition is in a general way, it is easy to see that in many cases it must act unjustly and harshly. Of course, the only way to accurately estimate a lad's progress is to judge him by himself—to ascertain his natural capabilities, allow for his

opportunities of improvement, and then determine to what extent he has benefited by his circumstances. But this no one is capable of doing, and so we are driven to the only practical system of competition and of rewarding by results.

This is the principle recognized in the Government system of education. Schoolmasters and teachers generally receive the assistance of the State in proportion to the results of their teaching. The consequence is that teachers give almost exclusive attention to the teaching of those subjects which will secure the largest amount of Government grant, or, in other words, pay the best. And so, notwithstanding the varied peculiarities of the children under their care—and every child in some particular needs a different training,—they all have to be put through the very same system, taught the same lessons, passed under the same examination, and are classified as quick or dull, clever or stupid, according to the results. Individuality seems to be lost sight of; peculiarities of temperament and mental faculties are forgotten; and unless a lad can profit by the ordinary lessons he has to take his chance. There is no time for personal explanation; he is left behind in the competition, and time after time he finds himself at the bottom of the list.

We can hardly blame our school-teachers for this state of affairs. We cannot expect them to stay to adapt their system of education to suit the peculiarities of some one or two queer lads, when such a course would take more time and trouble than would be required in coaching up a dozen other scholars to the required proficiency for gaining the Government reward. In most cases the teacher's salary, his reputation, and his continuance at his post depend on the numbers of children he can get passed by the Government inspector; and so, instead of giving his attention chiefly to the culture of good habits of study, and to such training as will benefit in the future, his whole

aim is to reap the largest amount of present advantage. And so scholars are coached and crammed for the examinations in a way to give one an idea that that, instead of being a gauge of present attainments, was itself a goal beyond which it was unnecessary to strive. Mere sharpness is encouraged. The scholars are trained so as to be able to answer certain questions, no matter whether they understand them or not. There is little time for thorough comprehension of the subject, since it takes all the year to get the pupils ready for the annual examination. And, however conscientious a teacher may be, he soon comes to regard as satisfactory any course of training which passes muster with the Government inspector.

And then parents encourage, perhaps even more so than teachers, this precocious cleverness in their children. With all the pardonable pride of parental affection, they love to hear their children spoken of as smart and quick. And Mr. Brown feels half inclined to lecture his son Charlie because he has won no prize, while young Robinson over the way carried off two. And in choosing a school for their children parents too frequently inquire as to the number of public prizes won by the scholars, rather than as to the thoroughness and soundness of the system of teaching.

"But what," asks some reader, "has all this to do with dunces in general, and with celebrated dunces in particular?" Well, to my mind it all seems to prove that dunces in the present day have a hard time of it, and that many of those who are thus set down are not dunces at all. Now, it seems to me that such lads stand greatly in need of encouragement. The smart lads have quite plenty. Not only are they praised at school and flattered at home, but hundreds of books are written to show what grand folks they may become if they only go on as they have commenced. They can read tales by the score of bankers and merchants taking a lad into their employ merely because

he won the first prize at Cramem Academy or Coachem School, and how he rose by steps so marvellously sudden as only to be known in fiction, until he married his master's daughter, inherited the business, and died a millionaire. Indeed, to judge by the tone of the majority of reward books, success in life seems to follow as a natural consequence of being at the head of a school-examination list. But while the quick lads are thus incited to believe themselves young judges, divines, or millionaires, the unsuccessful scholars are frowned upon, laughed over, and sneered at. And if they should by chance discover themselves mentioned in any of the books which come in their way, they find themselves invariably doomed to be the paid clerks or meaner dependents of their cleverer schoolmates.

Now, feeling as I do that the cleverness which gains the first prize in competitive examination should not be too highly praised or too much encouraged, I have set myself the task of pointing out a few examples of men who made their mark in after life, although when at school they were by no means remarkable for their attainments, and in some cases were actually regarded as dunces. In these sketches unsuccessful schoolboys will see what places of honour and esteem they may yet aspire to, even if for a time they fail at school; and the successful lads will see that some other qualities are valuable besides mere sharpness.

But before proceeding to the consideration of these Celebrated Dunces, let me just say why I think such cleverness as is so much encouraged in the present day is of little value in after life. In the first place, precocious cleverness is far more frequently a sign of small capacity than of great genius. If it were not so we should find the smart boys of the past generation developed into successful, clever men. But is this the case? On the contrary, how many of the quick lads of our boyhood are now settled down into commonplace, humdrum men. And how often

is it that, on hearing of the success of some school-fellow whom we had lost sight of for a number of years, we remark with surprise, "Well, I would not have thought it; he never seemed to have anything about him at school." Small minds, like the lower order of plants, reach their highest development quickly, and for a time seem to outgrow their stronger and nobler fellows. The mushroom springs up and reaches perfection long ere the acorn has shown the slightest symptom of the giant life within it. And so some schoolboys of slight capacity attain their full-blown honours before others of greater ability have fairly settled down to study at all.

I, of course, do not mean to say that genius does not show itself in childhood. It often—indeed nearly always—does; but it more frequently betrays itself in odd ways and queer preferences than by any great display of school learning. The young poet may occasionally show glimpses of the genius within him, but most probably it will be in such a way as to be more apparent to his school-fellows than to his teacher. The future statesman is far more likely to be famed among his playmates for a clever bargainer, or for his skill in planning and conducting a match at football or cricket, than to astonish his teacher by displaying a very close acquaintance with history, or a clear comprehension of the principles of political economy. The future engineer may be renowned among his friends for his working model of engines and factories, or for the miniature cascades he makes in the brook which runs through his father's garden; but he will very likely know next to nothing of Euclid, and may be a perfect dunce at mensuration. The really clever lad has got his brain teeming with a host of ideas, half of which he cannot yet comprehend, and so he pays but little attention to the dry and apparently meaningless studies before him; while another lad, to whom school work is "the be-all and the end-all" of his mental exertions, outruns him in the chase.

And then precocious cleverness is nearly always superficial. Schoolboys are not long in finding out how to secure prizes and honours on the cheapest terms. They soon become skilful in getting up lessons and answering set questions; but demand the why and the wherefore of the grammatical exercises they have written out, ask them to explain the process and reasons for the sum they have done, and you will soon see how superficial is the knowledge of which they make such display. The sort of ability which enables such scholars to gain a prize is of no possible use in real life. They can do practice sums—oh! yes, they did them all last quarter—but it would puzzle them sorely to reckon up their mother's monthly bill for groceries. They can do mensuration, of course; but if you ask them the height of a high wall, they want a ladder and a tape to measure it with. They know grammar perfectly, and discourse learnedly about mood, tense, and case; but somehow they never feel very certain when to use the pronoun "I," or when "me."

Now, as a rule, a really clever lad will be less superficial than one who is merely precocious, and simply because he will not say he knows a rule until he really comprehends it in all its bearings, he is sure to be left behind by the superficial scholar, who takes all for granted. "Slow and sure" is the motto of the really good scholar, and so, while his sharper school-fellow has again and again to be turned back to peruse the first page of the grammar, or to learn again the rudiments of mathematics, he goes plodding on, making sure of every step of the ground as he advances, and laying, in his slow way, a firm foundation for future attainments. Dunce he may be called, and dunce the examination-paper may seem to prove him to be, but his modest attainments are thorough, and of vastly more worth than those of the precocious youth, who, amid thunders of applause, carries off a prize won by sheer force of memory and imitation. The latter may be said

to put all his goods in the window, while the former scarcely presumes to show a modest sample of his warehoused stock.

And then a lad may get the unmerited title of dunce on account of indolence or timidity. And by indolence I do not mean downright idleness, which plays, and sleeps, and eats, and does nothing else. I refer now to that dreamy absent-mindedness in which the mind is wonderfully active, but occupied on matters far away from present duties and employment. This is a condition to which children of poetic temperament seem particularly prone. Perfectly oblivious of their surroundings, their minds are for hours busied with picturing some glorious scene or tragic event of which they have read, or heard, or dreamed; and when recalled to their irksome task, their little all of self-control is scarcely sufficient to fix their wandering thoughts on the lesson before them. It by no means follows that such meditative, imaginative scholars are dunces, though they are pretty sure to be classed as such, since their indolence prevents them taking their proper position among their fellows.

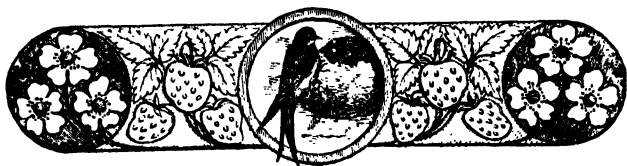
And then timidity is another cause of children being designated dunces without deserving the title. Few people can imagine the exquisite suffering endured by children of delicate organization when sent to take their chance and hold their own in the school and playground with a host of rude, overbearing, domineering school-fellows. Naturally retiring in disposition, and shrinking from even the slightest observation, the timid scholar is constantly betrayed by his nervous fears into the greatest blunders, and even when most confident of his task, and really quite correct, his timidity proves his ruin. To such an one a look is a severe censure, and a verbal reproof a matter of intense anguish. One or two sharp answers to demands for information, and he soon stops asking—a word or two in ridicule of his attempts, and he ceases trying. Give

such a boy a stern, quick teacher, with a piercing eye, a harsh voice, and a jerky, pouncing manner, and you may label him "dunce" at once. And yet he is no dunce. It is just possible that the very peculiarities which cause his failure may be proofs of his rare abilities. Put him under a gentle tutor—one who knows his peculiarities and treats him in accordance therewith—and you will find the silent, timid, blundering dunce transformed into a self-assured, correct, and discriminating scholar.

To all such miscalled dunces—to all those who will not say they can see through a millstone until a hole is bored through it—to all who, through a conscientious desire for thoroughness, or from any other cause, find themselves dubbed Knights of the Order of the Dunce's Cap without really deserving that distinction, the succeeding sketches of Celebrated Dunces are respectfully dedicated, with the hope that they may inspire them with fresh energy, and with a determination no longer even to seem to be dunces.







## I.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A BARONET.

**N**OTHING very remarkable in that," says some reader; "a great many of the baronets, knights, and other titled gentry are far from being remarkable for intellectual ability." Very true, and so long as such titles are hereditary we shall continue to find examples of noblemen whose only nobility lies in their title. In olden time, if a man took a city, or laid his velvet cape in the mud to keep his sovereign's feet dry, discovered a new colony, or cured the king's gout, he was rewarded with knighthood or a baronetcy, and, in the latter case, his heirs inherited his title without being required to exhibit even the slight degree of merit which originally gained it. But the subject of our sketch did not inherit his title. He gained it for himself, and, strange though it seem, this "dunce" was created a baronet in recognition of his literary labours.

It was the month of October, about a hundred years ago, and lads were hurrying along the streets of Edinburgh to the High or Grammar School. Among the rest, a wee Scotch laddie might have been seen limping along from his father's house in George's Square to take his place for the first time in the far-famed school. He had a pleasant, rather thoughtful face, flaxen hair, and bright grey eyes. As he went along, the little cripple seemed all absorbed

with thoughts about the new scenes in which he would have to act his part; and the expression of his face frequently changed from pleasant humour to excited apprehension, as he thought of his future companions, sports, and tasks.

The new scholar was only seven years old, and his elementary education had been neglected in consequence of his lameness; he was found, on examination by the master to be scarcely so far advanced as the boys of his own age in the class in which he was placed. Only in one particular was he abreast of his classmates, and in that he could equal any of them. He could read remarkably well, and during the long holiday enforced by his ill-health he had devoured all the tales, romances, and adventures which came within his reach at home or abroad. But though so much behind his classmates he was by no means dull; and though it took him a long time to make up for past idleness he did at last overtake his rivals. And having done so he might soon have got near the head of the class, and might, perhaps, have been the first boy had he cared to exert himself.

But, strange to say, little cripple as he was, the lad was far more ambitious to distinguish himself in the play-yard than in the schoolroom. It was as if his lameness inspired him with a wish to outrival his schoolmates in the very direction in which nature seemed to have placed him at the greatest disadvantage. After the first few months his lessons troubled him but little, so he seldom cared whether he learned them or not; but it was no easy thing for him to run, and jump, and play football like his schoolmates, and so all his energies were devoted to the acquisition of these accomplishments.

He was of a naturally amiable disposition, and soon made friends; but the blood of the old border Scotchmen coursed through his veins, and what he thought his rights he was prepared to defend, even at great odds, and with

a disregard for pain rather remarkable in so young a lad. He had not been long at the High School when one morning a dispute arose about some trifling matter between him and a somewhat bigger schoolfellow. The two disputants wrangled long and loudly, and the fair-haired, hot-blooded cripple was by no means backward in giving angry retorts to his enraged schoolfellow. Soon a little crowd gathered round, urging the couple to settle the quarrel by a fight. The bigger schoolfellow was nothing loth so to decide the dispute, but his ideas of honour prevented him challenging one so little his equal in size and agility; and so, as he glanced at his opponent's deformed limb, he said contemptuously, that it was "no use to hargle-bargle with a cripple." The reference to his affliction, and the implied inferiority resulting therefrom, stung the other to the quick, and, with flushed cheek and flashing eye, he retorted that if he might fight mounted he would try his hand with any one of his inches. An elder scholar passing at the time heard the challenge, and relishing the fun, proposed that the two boys should be seated on a deal board, and tied fast face to face to fight it out. This was done, and when the bold little cripple limped home to dinner his face bore ample evidence of his hardihood, and of his opponent's superior skill.

Our little friend the cripple was in many respects a queer lad, and though his teachers noticed nothing remarkable in him, his schoolfellows soon found him to be a most delightful companion. Few qualities are more admired by schoolboys than pluck, and our hero's courage in fighting a boy bigger than himself called forth the high esteem of his playmates. But as they got to know him better they found he had other and more attractive qualities. No lad in the whole school had such a store of romance and mystery, and none could equal him in the rare art of telling such tales.

In the winter months, when the weather was too severe

for outdoor games, the little cripple would willingly seat himself in the centre of a host of his schoolfellows, and commence a tale of knights and ladies fair, or some story of weird enchantment. So great was the attraction that the lads quarrelled for the seats near their entertainer. And as with eager eyes they watched the changing expression of his face, he vividly related the stories he had read during his illness.

And there was this peculiarity about his story-telling, he was nearly always correct in particulars. If the story were of a combat he could describe with ease the horse and harness of the two knights, the colour of their dresses, and the devices on their shields, and so make them stand out in the imagination of his hearers clearly distinct from each other. He never described a Saxon warrior in a Norman dress, nor talked of magistrates when he meant barons ; and, however long the story might be, he never got it jumbled into confusion, but kept the interest excited right to the end, when he would describe the climax with a dramatic force which never failed to call forth from his hearers eager demands for another tale.

And not only did he relate such romances as he had read. When his memory ran short of these this queer Scotch laddie would make some up "out of his head." He used to call them "dreams." Very fond of dreaming was this lame lad. He dreamt more when awake than he did when asleep. He was very often dreaming when he ought to have been doing his lessons. But his greatest time for dreaming was on the Sunday afternoon. His father was a very rigid Presbyterian, and would allow nothing but strictly religious books to be read on the Sabbath day. Well, this little fellow did not like the dry theological books of that age ; and so, when he got tired of the beautifully pathetic stories of the Old Testament, he would lie down on the sofa, and with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, or peering far away up into the deep blue sky, he

would settle himself down "to dream," that is to imagine all kinds of beautiful landscapes, enchanted palaces, and glorious supernatural forms; and when called upon during the next week he would describe these "dreams" with as much minuteness of detail as if he had read of them. And then he had a very queer way of speaking about ordinary affairs. If he wanted fresh ink, he would invent an odd story about "sending his doggie to the mill again"; and so with whatever else occurred, he would give it some queer turn of thought or word which made his school-fellows laugh, and sometimes even provoked the smile of his teacher. But while thus dreaming and story-telling our young friend was making far more progress in the playground than in the school. He was always endeavouring to equal or excel his schoolfellows in leaping, running, climbing, or fighting; for though so much liked by his schoolmates, disputes frequently led to successive encounters like the first, astride on a deal board.

The Edinburgh lads of that day were much given to a rough sort of play, which often ended in street brawls and fights. The lads who lived on one side of the city would challenge those of another, and meet them in the streets to determine which had most courage or strength. Sometimes the "bickers," as they were called, were so violent, and the passions they excited so uncontrollable, that the old Highlanders, the only police in Edinburgh at that time, had to be called out to quell the disturbance. One such event happened during our young friend's stay at the High School. It was winter, and an unusually heavy fall of snow had gladdened the hearts of the schoolboys. They, of course, began snowballing—quietly at first, but as the numbers increased and they got more excited, they found the ample play-yard too narrow a field for their mimic combat; so they extended it to the streets. The old Highlanders interfered, but in defiance of them and their Lochaber axes the High School boys returned their charge.



SIR WALTER SCOTT AND THE TOWN GUARD.



They manned the Cowgate Port, and presenting an unbroken front to the ancient officers, they pelted them unmercifully with snow. Among the foremost in the fight, and most active in planning it, was our friend the cripple, whose head was full of battles and sieges, and who felt half a hero as he contributed his share of snowballs to the discomfiture of the old soldiers.

At the age of eleven, when he left the High School, our cripple was as fleet of foot as any of his schoolfellows, and in the difficult feat of climbing the great Castle Rock he was more venturesome and skilful than any. Notwithstanding his lameness, he was able to hold his own against all comers, and he had the hardihood which would suffer many defeats without being vanquished. But his progress in the playground still continued to be much more marked than his advance in his studies. True, he had crept up to about the middle of his class, and occasionally he "glanced like a meteor to the top," but his head was so full of romance, and his time so taken up with "dreams" and games, that he rarely did his best at his lessons. Occasionally, it is true, he equally astonished his teacher and his classmates by his answers; and if the lesson had anything to do with war, romance, or history, he would display a wonderful acquaintance with the subject. Indeed, on one occasion, his tutor, good old Dr. Adam, styled him the historian of his class, and said that though many understood the Latin better, none appreciated its meaning so well. But it was only occasionally that he cared to exert himself and try to get to the top of the class. The seat he usually occupied was a very cosy one near the fire, and he generally valued the comfort of a fireside seat above the honour of being first in his class.

On one occasion, however, he was, for some reason or other, anxious to get at the top of the bench, and the means he used to get there were about equally ingenious and discreditable. There was one boy who had held the



coveted seat for a long time, and, do what he would, our lame friend could not displace him. At last, after long cogitation, he hit on a plan by which to obtain the desired place. He noticed that whenever this boy was asked a question he always fingered one of the buttons on the lower part of his waistcoat. So, without much ado, he got his penknife, and coming slyly up to his school-fellow cut the button from the waistcoat. The experiment acted like magic. Directly the boy at the top of the bench was asked a question his fingers involuntarily began to search for the inspiring button. Of course they sought in vain, and instead of the lad replying, the answer went clean out of his mind. The consequence was that the lame rogue slipped into his place.

After leaving the High School our hero spent some time visiting his aunt at Kelso. His health had again shown signs of failing him, and so, instead of going at once to college, he spent a long holiday in the country. This circumstance threw him again rather behind his schoolmates, so that when he again joined them at the college he found himself at a disadvantage. Many of these had been his friends at the High School, and it vexed him to find them so much ahead of him in some branches of study. Most of them had picked up the rudiments of Greek at the High School, and so, while they were already beginning to understand and like their new study, our "dunco" was droning over the dry alphabet and drier grammar.

It might be thought that this circumstance would have fired his ambition to excel them. On the contrary, however, he decided not to learn the language at all. He never got his lessons ready, and, no matter what his tutor said, he doggedly persisted in neglecting them. Among his classmates he was honoured with the title of "The Greek Blockhead." What cared he? There was only one Greek author he would ever have cared to read—Homer,—and he

had already got an English translation of his poetry, so that he saw no reason for wading through all the idioms and peculiarities of the original. Instead of being shamed out of his neglect of the language, he even had the audacity to write an essay, in which he attempted to prove the folly of studying Greek. Irritated as his tutor had been by his previous neglect, this essay was like a spark to gunpowder. He severely rated the youth for his impertinence, and finished up by saying that "a dunce he was, and a dunce he would always remain."

But, strange to say, while our dunce would not learn Greek, he was quick enough at other languages. Without any pressure upon him, he soon made himself master of the French and Italian. For why? Was it because they were fashionable, the correct thing, or because they were likely to be useful in business? Nothing of the kind. He had discovered an almost inexhaustible store of romance, poetry, and adventure to which these languages furnished the keys; and so he eagerly studied them. He still devoured all the English works congenial to his tastes, and even a few theological and scientific treatises, but the only college studies which seemed ever to call forth his fullest energies were history and moral philosophy, and in the study of these he frequently received his tutor's commendation. He was barely fifteen when he left the college, and was apprenticed to his father to learn the practice of the law.

And now, having traced the dunce through his school and college career, let us see how and for what he became "celebrated." And to most readers a sufficient answer to these questions will be found in the simple statement that the name of the Scotch "dunce" whose early history is here sketched was Walter Scott. No other works of the same class have ever achieved such a universal and permanent popularity as his, and, with the exception of the Bible, and perhaps a few great English classics such as "The Pilgrim's

Progress," no other books are so widely read by persons of all ages and every rank in life.

As a poet, he holds an honourable place in the second rank of those great writers whose glowing verse is the glory and the boast of our grand old English literature. What is grander than the clash and clangour which ring through "Marmion's" martial verse? How tender the pathos, and how charming the beauty which breathes in the first part of "The Lady of the Lake!" And what weird enchantment and fervid patriotism we find in the mournful "Lay of the Last Minstrel!" Let critics carp as they may—it is their business,—in Scott's poetry there are a beauty and a fervour which will never lose their power to charm, so long as the English language is spoken by free-born Englishmen.

But it is to his merits as a prose author that Scott more particularly owes his ever-increasing popularity. When as a High School boy he enchanted his playfellows with his tales and "dreams," he little thought the time would come when a whole nation should, as it were, crowd round him to listen to his bewitching stories. And yet to-day the names of the personages he describes in his tales are "familiar in our mouths as household words." By his marvellous genius he has widely extended our acquaintance, and we feel that we know the creatures of his brain—the men and women, who in his works stand out in such picturesque life-likeness. And the quaint sayings and strange acts of our own ancestors are not more frequently quoted than are the imagined performances of that crowd of individuals to whom our poet's pen has given "a local habitation and a name." In all matters of fact, true as history; in moral principles, irreproachable; and for style almost unequalled; Scott's tales take the foremost rank among works of fiction, and of themselves are amply sufficient to make their author celebrated.

It has been the fate of many geniuses to spend their

lives in obscure poverty, their worth only being discovered by succeeding generations. Not so with this "dunce." His writings at once leaped into amazing popularity. Publishers gladly offered almost fabulous prices for his very humblest productions. Wealth flowed in, and he was enabled to realize the ambition of his life by the erection of a beautiful mansion at Abbotsford. Here he kept up an establishment of almost princely magnificence, and here great men and noble dames from all parts of the world came, like pilgrims to a shrine, to pay their tribute or honour to the illustrious bard. True, misfortune came at last; but, though the schemes and plans of a lifetime were frustrated at one blow, our hero stood out amid the ruin of his hopes more illustrious than before: and those who cared not for his poetry and disliked his tales, grew eloquent in admiration of the manhood which could survive such misfortune, and the honesty which chose an old age of dreadful drudgery rather than die under the disgrace of debt.

Even George IV.—by no means a virtuous or an honourable prince—even he felt bound to recognize Scott's literary labours. Accordingly, in the year 1820 he summoned him to London, and created him a baronet, an honour far more worthily bestowed than many others dispensed by that monarch.

And yet, as we have seen, Scott made no great figure at school. He was never one of the model boys, marched out on visiting days to have his head patted, and to receive complimentary peppermints. If his teachers did not set him down as an actual dunce, they certainly did not think him clever. Had he lived in the days of competitive examinations, it is almost certain he would have figured somewhere about the middle of the list. And even had he been so fortunate as to win a prize, he would have been sure to forfeit it by fighting, or some other breach of discipline. He was one of those who either could not, or

would not, be educated by method and system ; and so with every advantage within his reach, he neglected nearly all, and picked up his education in a way peculiarly his own.

“A dunce you are, and a dunce you’ll remain,” said his enraged Greek Professor, Dr. Dalzell. And so far as the obnoxious language was concerned, he certainly did remain a dunce, for he tells us in after-life that he had forgotten even the alphabet. But the Professor did not mean to limit his prophecy to the Greek language, and years afterwards, when Scott’s name was on everyone’s lip, the old classical tutor gladly revoked the sentence he had uttered, and felt proud to have had even the slightest connection with such a brilliant author.



## II.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME LL.D.

**S**OME children are called dunces simply because by their peculiar circumstances they scarcely have a fair chance to learn. Perhaps their parents are too poor to give them suitable tuition, or perhaps, in consequence of the lameness or delicate health, they are not able to attend school so regularly as their stronger acquaintances. But in the case of the subject of the present sketch nothing of the kind can be pleaded, for, strange to say, this "dunce" was the son of a schoolmaster—a man of considerable attainments. Some readers may think this only another illustration of the proverb, "The shoemaker's wife goes the worst shod," and they may suggest that this schoolmaster gave too much attention to those scholars who brought fees, and cared but little about his own children who had to be taught free. Such an explanation, however, would not in this case be true. The father seems to have paid great attention to the education of his children, for he not only taught them himself but sent them to the best schools near home.

Our "dunce" was born at Moybeg, an almost unknown village in the North of Ireland, about the year 1762. We say *about* 1762, for the village parson seems to have had a very free and easy way of performing his duties, and among other negligences he omitted to keep a register of births,

and consequently the date of our hero's birth cannot be fixed with any exactness.

His father had been educated for the Church, but his studies had been suddenly brought to a close by an early and somewhat imprudent marriage; and at the birth of his second son—the subject of this sketch—he was earning his living by school teaching. Like most Irish schoolmasters of that day, he found it impossible to rear a family respectably on the slight income from his school, and so, in addition to teaching the shock-headed peasant boys their “A B C,” and the sons of the gentry their “hie, hac, hoc,” he had to work hard on a little farm he rented in order to provide for his rising family.

To relieve him somewhat of his burden the grandparents had offered to take charge of the second child and bring it up as their own; and so, in addition to his other misfortunes, our young Irish lad was threatened with the additional one of being “granny reared.” This arrangement, however, was not found to answer. The youngster was too self-willed and venturesome to submit to his grandmother's doting authority. She wished him to keep by her side in the chimney corner; but directly he saw a chance he would dart out of the house, and at his own sweet will climb over walls and scramble through hedges and ditches. His grandmother, timid kind-hearted old lady, got quite alarmed for his safety; and so, after being almost frightened out of her wits by seeing the lad looking down the draw-well, she packed him off back to his mother, declining any longer to be responsible for his safety.

Though not ill-treated at home, our “dunce” seems to have had a somewhat hard life of it. His elder brother was his mother's favourite, and consequently always did right. In any quarrel or dispute between the lads he generally got off with an admonition, while the younger one received a severe chastisement. Our young friend did not seem to suffer, however, by the sternness of his parents;

indeed, when an old man, he attributed his hale health and energy to the hardiness of his childhood.

However dull he afterwards proved at learning, our "dunce" was precocious enough in some things. It is said he was able to walk at eight months old, and that a month later he was able to run about without an attendant. He was really remarkable, too, for his endurance of cold. In the winters of his childhood he would frequently get out of bed unknown to anyone, and slyly creep out of the house with no other covering than his nightshirt. He would then scrape and dig holes in the snow, and contentedly sit down in them until discovered. Happily these extraordinary exposures instead of injuring his health seemed to give tone and strength to his youthful frame. While still a mere child he established quite a reputation in the neighbourhood for muscular strength, of which he often gave proof by rolling huge heavy stones. His father was proud of the lad's strength, and often got him to exhibit it for the gratification and astonishment of visitors.

Another peculiarity of this queer lad was his great dislike of fat men, or, as he called them, "men with big bellies." Now, very near his father's house there lived a man named Pearce Quintin, a very pleasant and agreeable old gentleman, and he had taken a great fancy to this little Samson. He often brought him fruit, toys, and those little presents of which children think so much, and tried in every way to make friends with his little neighbour. But it was all to no purpose. Mr. Quintin was a big, burly, fat man, and the lad would have nothing to do with him. If he had brought pecks of fruits and pounds of sweeties his unfortunate corpulence would have defeated their power to establish an acquaintance. Indeed, the little fellow was so very violently opposed to speaking with the old gentleman that he could hardly be induced to accept his presents; and when he did take them it must



have been with a silent but well-understood protest against further intimacy.

A hundred years ago superstition was far more widespread than it is now, and fortune-telling was commonly believed in. It is therefore no proof of gross ignorance in our hero's mother to find that she consulted a prophet concerning him. No wonder she was anxious to get a glimpse at his future, for he doubtless caused her many an anxious thought. What with his wilfulness, his amazing strength, his stubborn aversions, and his apparent dulness, she certainly had reasons for thinking him a remarkable child. Now, it was commonly supposed that dumb persons had the gift of knowing future events, and so when one of these unfortunates chanced to call at the house the little scapegrace of the family was marched up for him to exercise his prophetic function upon him. The man surveyed him attentively for some time, and then by motions indicated that the lad would grow up fond of the bottle, be very fat, and have an enormous belly !

Of course to our youngster this seemed the greatest misfortune that could befall him, and he could not have been more terribly dismayed if the prophet had decreed that he should henceforth walk on all fours. He never for a second doubted the fortune-teller's ability to prophecy, but he had learned some little of theology, and believed God could in some way prevent the dreaded fulfilment. He accordingly ran off into the fields, and hiding himself behind some furze bushes, he prayed fervently to be delivered from his impending fate. "O Lord God," prayed the terror-stricken lad, "have mercy on me, and never suffer me to be like Pearce Quintin !"

But perhaps the strangest thing about this strange lad was his stupidity. He was a long, long time before he mastered the alphabet. The strange, queerly-shaped letters had not the slightest meaning for him ; and he was constantly confounding the letter "O" pure and simple with

the letter of a similar shape, but with a curly tail, which to his bewilderment he was told was "Q." His teacher upbraided and punished him, and the smallest children in the infant class laughed at him.

At last, by force of constant repetition and perpetual staring at the alphabet in his primer, the letters one by one crept into his head, and to his great relief he was moved on a stage from the mysterious alphabet to the scarcely less mysterious "a-b ab," and "b-e be." But every step of his progress was marked by the same difficulties. Always at the bottom of the class, constantly being punished, and ever faulty, the lad very nearly gave up in despair of ever being able to read. The physical infliction he got, and the extra lessons he was set to learn as a punishment for his backwardness, made him more backward still. His teachers seem to have given him up as a hopeless dunce, and so, instead of helping him out of little difficulties, they scolded and punished him, till he seemed to regard chastisement as a necessary part of his education.

One day a schoolmaster from a neighbouring village called at the school and heard a few of the lads say their lessons. Our "unnce" happened to be in the class, and knowing his deficiency he put off the dreaded moment as long as he could by allowing all the rest of the lads to precede him. Of course he had to go at last, and what with his slight knowledge of the lesson, his dread of the strange schoolmaster, and his consciousness of the jeers of his classmates, he stumbled through the lesson in a wretchedly imperfect style. The teacher felt called upon for his own credit's sake to apologize for the lad's shortcomings by saying that "that lad was a grievous dunce." But somehow or other the visitor did not agree with the teacher. Possibly he merely wished to encourage the poor lad; or perhaps he was a man of great experience, and saw in our "dunce's" apparent stupidity only the evidence of a mind which required to satisfy itself of every step

before proceeding to another. At any rate, to the astonishment of our hero, he patted him on the head, and said to the teacher, "Never fear, sir; this lad will make a good scholar yet."

This was quite a new idea for the backward youngster. He had been so long spoken of as a blockhead that he had very nearly come to believe he must be one. And now for the first time he had been patted on the head, smiled at pleasantly, and his future progress in study spoken of as certain and considerable. "Perhaps, after all," thought he, "the strange gentleman understands me better than my teacher, and possibly I might even yet become a good scholar. At any rate, I'll try. I won't always be scolded and punished and sneered at if by trying in real earnest I can prevent it." And so our "dunce" plucked up his courage, and began again quite manfully to apply himself to his tasks. Perhaps his teacher, too, thought there might after all be something he could not comprehend in this queer, dogged, stupid lad, and so possibly he paid a little more attention to him than before. Be that as it may, the now hopeful lad made a little spurt forward, and though he was by no means abreast of his classmates he advanced so far as to prove to himself and to his teacher that it was possible for him to learn.

As soon as he could read tolerably well, his father took him in hand, and commenced to teach him Latin; for strange though it may seem, he had determined to make his second son a good scholar, and so fit him either for a clergyman or a schoolmaster. If it was difficult for the youngster to learn his native tongue, judge what would be the magnitude of the difficulty in learning another language, and that the driest and most difficult of dead tongues! But hope and encouragement had done so much for our hero that he toiled patiently on at his Latin grammar, though it must have seemed to him a perfectly useless study. In course of time, and after an almost incredible



ADAM CLARKE AND THE STRANGE VISITOR.



amount of purely mechanical labour, he reached the conjugation of verbs, and then his heart failed him, or else the task became too great, for he came to a dead stop. In vain was every attempt he made to commit to memory the next two lines of the conjugation. He stared at the words till they seemed to be playing leapfrog with one another, and he repeated them over and over till they had lost all meaning to him, and he could not tell which came first. His father saw his perplexity, but let him struggle on with the difficulty, hoping he would at last master it. But instead of that, after poring over the lesson for two days, the urchin on the third morning threw aside his grammar and gave up in despair.

This his father saw would never do, and so he determined to rouse his son's energies to the accomplishment of the task, though the way in which he chose to do so was certainly not remarkable for gentleness. He ordered him to take up his Latin grammar again, and added, "If you do not speedily get that lesson I will pull your ears as long as Jowler's (a big dog in the yard), and you will be a beggar to the day of your death." This threat was received by the rest of the class as a good joke, and smiles of ridicule and silent jeers passed round, and one, bolder than the rest, ventured in a whisper to call the despairing pupil "a stupid ass."

As the encouragement of the strange schoolmaster had been one turning point in our young friend's career, so this threat of his father, harsh as it was, was destined to prove another. As the lad himself tells us in after life, "he felt as if something had broken within him." The jibes and jeers of his schoolfellows, the threat of his father, and the prophecy that unless he altered he would be a beggar all the days of his life—these three influences acted on him with such force as to call forth all his latent courage and pride. "What," said he to himself, "shall I ever be a dunce, and the butt of these fellows' insults?" He

snatched up the book, and in a few minutes conquered the task which for two days had been unconquerable. From this time he never stuck fast in his Latin, though in other studies he experienced almost as great difficulties as he had in that. Arithmetic, for instance, he never could master, though it is said his slight progress might to some extent be attributed to the defects of the book used in the school.

Unfortunately, just as our "dunco" seemed in a fair way to get rid of the title, the circumstances of the family were such that he could only attend school as a half-timer. His father's little farm required attention, and so he and his elder brother had to look after it in turns, one attending school in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. In order, however, to make up for their enforced absence, each of the brothers told the other at night what he had learnt at school, a fact which proves that however dull, our hero was by this time really eager for knowledge.

At the early age of nine our "dunco" turned poet. Like most other productions of the class, his first effort was prompted by strong personal feeling. One of his schoolfellows had incurred his displeasure, and instead of thrashing him, as judging by his great strength he was doubtless well able to do, he resolved on punishing him with his pen. And so one Saturday afternoon he sat down, and wrote a satirical poem of the enormous length of one hundred and seventy-five lines. He borrowed the story of "The Pigmy and the Cranes" from one of the Latin poets, and worked it up into ridicule of his obnoxious school-fellow.

His mind seems now to have fully awakened from the torpor in which its powers had hitherto been buried, and we find him experiencing the most exquisite intellectual delight in the study of Virgil and other classical authors. English books too proved a great attraction. Every penny that he and his brother could get by extra work, errands, or for good conduct, was hoarded up for the purchase of

some coveted book. And a strange lot of books they bought. His first library consisted of the most extravagant legends, and fairy tales, such as "History of Tom Thumb" and "Jack the Giant Killer." Silly rubbish you may think for a lad to get into his head. But, strange to say, when this lad grew up to be a learned doctor he actually attributed his taste for literature to his reading of such books. He says:—"Had I never read these books it is probable I should never have been a reader or a scholar of any kind." He was of the opinion that tales of enchantment confirmed him in the belief of a Supreme Power, and that he should always have been a coward but for the romances which fired his courage. Later on he became possessed of "The Pilgrim's Progress," which was of course a great favourite, though he never for a moment thought of it as any other than a book of chivalry; "Robinson Crusoe," from which, he tells us, he learned more expressly his duty to God and to his parents, and a firmer belief in Divine Providence, than from all else he read or heard from books or men during his early years; "Æsop's Fables" and the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," to the perusal of which he attributed the taste for Oriental history, which led him to make it an especial study.

And now, having traced the career of the "dunce," let us glance at the divine; for, as many will have guessed, the strong, stupid, singular Irish lad grew up to be Dr. Adam Clarke, a most useful and distinguished Wesleyan minister, and the author of standard works on theology and Biblical criticism. As a young man he was intended for the Church, but the family circumstances did not allow of his being sent to college, so he was apprenticed to a kinsman, a linen merchant of Coleraine. Adam had, however, been taken notice of by some of the Methodist preachers who called at his father's house, and they persuaded him to try to preach. A few efforts on his part convinced them that he had unusual qualifications for the work. Mr. Wesley



was communicated with, and Adam was sent to Kingswood School to qualify for the ministry. At the age of eighteen he was sent out by Mr. Wesley as a circuit preacher, and for fifty years he continued an able and successful minister. He was three times honoured by his brethren in being elected to the presidency of the Conference. He was most eminent for the pulpit ability, but he nevertheless fulfilled the prophecy of the kindly schoolmaster, and became indeed a "great scholar." His talents, acquisitions, and labours called forth universal admiration, and were acknowledged by some of the greatest and most learned men of the day. He was employed by Government in the difficult task of arranging and editing a large collection of State papers. His historical researches attracted the attention of the Society of Antiquarians, and they elected him a Fellow of their Society. The diplomas of "Master of Arts" and "Doctor of Laws" were conferred, unsolicited, by the University of Aberdeen.

And yet among "illustrious dunces" we shall scarcely find a case in which the boy was so unmistakably dull. Young Adam Clarke was neither obstinate, careless, nor idle. He tried hard to learn, and perhaps was more diligent than many of his apparently clever classmates; and yet he could not learn. To all appearance he was a downright stupid dunce, who would never be fit for anything better than following the plough or breaking stones.

Of course it is easy for us now that we know the result to say that the boy was not really stupid, but that he could not learn a thing until he thoroughly understood it. And just so it is to-day. Many a lad with really grand abilities is being snubbed and blamed, merely because he wants to know the "why" and the "wherefore" of the rule he is set to learn.



### III.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT M.P.

**R**ATHER more than ninety years ago there lived at Earl's Colne, in Essex, a family consisting of a widow lady, her three sons, and two daughters. Their home was a commodious and substantial mansion, standing in its own grounds, and furnished with elegance and comfort. The eldest son, Thomas, the subject of this sketch, was at the time referred to about six years of age. Except for the early loss of his father, the lad seems to have been unusually happy in his circumstances. He inherited a good name, was descended by both parents from good county families, lived amid the comforts and endearing associations of an ancestral home, and had most of his wishes and whims gratified; and besides his present enjoyments, he was as eldest son expected to inherit a large estate in Ireland.

About a year and a half before his father's death the young heir had been sent to a school at Kingston, where it was hoped he would learn the rudiments of education, and thus be qualified for admission to a more advanced school. But the schoolmaster seems to have held extreme views as to the minimum amount of nourishment required by his pupils, for what with insufficiency of food, and the cruel

treatment of the bigger boys, the lad's health gave way, and he had to be removed.

After such an unpleasant experience it is no wonder the little fellow did not feel very anxious to try another school. But as he could not be allowed to grow up without education, he was sent to Greenwich, to a school conducted by Dr. Charles Burney, a very different kind of man from his first master. Here he seems to have fallen in with some very agreeable schoolfellows, and time passed somewhat pleasantly.

For eight years he remained under Dr. Burney's tuition and in that time he had grown into a very tall, broad-shouldered, awkward, lazy lad. On account of his unwieldy size and his general mildness of temper his school-fellows nicknamed him "Elephant." But while his bodily growth had been so surprisingly rapid, his mental progress was just as surprisingly slow. He never cared for his lessons, and, from sheer idleness and disinclination to study, he seldom learned them. The only part of school life he really liked was the holidays. These he nearly always spent at home, and then every day found him riding, shooting, fishing, or in some other way gratifying his fondness for outdoor pursuits and pastimes. In any of these sports our hero was far in advance of other boys of his age, but at school he fell far behind them; and little fellows who could scarcely measure to his shoulder wrote his Latin exercises for him and worked his sums, on the understanding that he, being the biggest boy in the school, should protect them if they got into trouble.

Yet, with all his dulness and laziness, there were many good points about this ungainly, uncouth lad. From his earliest childhood he had given evidence of pluck, perseverance, and persistency in whatever he undertook. He generally succeeded in any enterprise on which he set out with earnest purpose. It is related of him that once, when quite a child, he was asked to give a message to a pig

drover who had some time before passed him on the road. He at once set off, and, tracking the man by the footmarks of the pigs, ran on up lanes and across fields until he overtook the man, nearly three miles on the way. He lost one of his boots in the mud during the chase, but he never stopped till he had accomplished his errand.

He was also perfectly truthful. Once while at Dr. Burney's one of the ushers accused him of talking in the class, and, though Thomas denied the offence, told him to write out the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel as a punishment. The lad would not, but doggedly waited until Dr. Burney entered the room, and then, walking boldly up to him, he told him of the circumstance, and denied having talked. The usher quite as firmly asserted that he did; but the head-master had been so much impressed by the boy's habitual conscientiousness that he settled the matter by saying, "I never found the boy tell a lie, and will not disbelieve him now."

This last feature in our hero's character may doubtless be attributed to the home training of his excellent mother. She was a woman strong in mind, firm in purpose, generous in disposition, and of great courage. To many her mode of training her children will seem almost the worst that could be devised. She seems to have allowed them the utmost liberty. When at home from school they could go where they pleased, when they pleased, and do what they pleased. With Thomas, especially, she seems to have withheld almost all restraint. His father being dead, she allowed—nay, even encouraged—him to take his father's place as head of the establishment. The servants, indoors and out, were directed to obey his orders, and even his brothers and sisters had to surrender to his will. She consulted him as her equal in all matters of business, and generally deferred to his opinion on questions relating to the estate. No wonder, then, that with such training our "dunce" grew up bold, resolute, and self-willed.

But the liberty allowed by our hero's mother to her children was not the weak consent of a powerless rule. 'It was, in her opinion, the only way in which they could be trained to be independent, self-confident, and self-sufficient. She seems to have had a great contempt for the excessive care that would try to cage children into perfectly safe limits, or attempt to pad their way through life with velvet cushions. She preferred that her children should early feel their feet, try their strength, and know their weakness and so learn to act for, and rely upon, themselves. And if the mother seems to have carried her ideas to a dangerous extreme, we must remember, as the Rev. T. Binney has said, "that she succeeded—her son turned out the sort of man she wished to make him." And it must be remembered, too, that while she allowed her children, and especially her eldest son, such great liberty, she demanded and received the most implicit obedience to her will. On one occasion, during the Christmas holidays, Thomas had struck his sister's governess in a fit of anger, and, as a punishment for this outbreak, he was ordered to stay at school during the Easter holidays. For some reason, however, his mother felt inclined to forego the infliction of the punishment, providing her son was sufficiently repentant. And so, a few days before the "breaking up," she visited the school and spoke to him on the subject. He seemed, however, to have become quite reconciled to the thought of spending his holiday at school, or else he thought the governess fairly deserved the blow he had given her, for, instead of humbly acknowledging his fault and eagerly accepting pardon, he treated the matter with such an appearance of proud indifference that she left him to take his punishment as threatened.

Next in importance in its influence on the character of this tall, wilful, lazy lad was the constant companionship of his father's gamekeeper, named Abraham Plaistow. He could neither read nor write, and his speech was the

broadest dialect, but he had a great store of useful knowledge on all subjects that had come under his notice, and, with rare good sense, he had the rarer quality of perfect integrity and honour. With him as their companion, Thomas and his brothers rambled about the woods and grounds, hunting, fishing, or shooting, and under his directions they soon became accomplished sportsmen. He often took advantage of his companionship to instil into the minds of his young masters principles of honour and virtue. He never said or did anything before them of which their mother would disapprove, nor would he allow them to do so. One day, when out hunting, and just when the sport was at its highest, Thomas made use of an improper expression. Abraham respectfully rebuked him, and insisted on his returning home at once, which Thomas reluctantly did.

At fifteen years of age our hero left school; not because he had finished his education, for he was still a careless, awkward dunce; nor because he had learned all Dr. Burney could teach, for he was very far from being first boy; nor yet because his teacher had recommended him to go to college, for surely no lad could hope to pass even the preliminary examination with such meagre attainments. No; his reasons for leaving school were very different. In the first place, he had been there long enough. During the eight years he had been at Greenwich scores of lads had entered, shot past him, and left; and he was fast becoming a sort of antiquity connected with the place. And certainly he was big enough to leave. The "Elephant" was often being mistaken by the townspeople for a junior usher, and he was getting quite sick of hearing folks ask "how much longer that tall young man was going to stay at school." He was thoroughly tired, too, of a place where he occupied such a humbling position. At home he could associate on terms of equality with grown men—he could head the chase or fill his bag with game with as much skill as many

an experienced sportsman. No wonder, then, that he was anxious to get away from school. He was quite weary of having his lessons done by little shrimps of boys one-third his size. It was not pleasant to be under obligations to such small fry, and the deception involved in giving in exercises which others had written must often have troubled this truthful, outspoken lad. There were, of course, two ways open to him by which he could have got out of his humiliating position. He might have set resolutely to work to master his difficulties, and take an honourable place in the school. But that involved hard work and tedious drudgery, and Thomas, disliking these, saw an easier way. He would throw up the whole affair altogether, and have no lessons or studies to bother him.

And so, during the holidays, he talked the matter over with his mother, and pleaded the uselessness and irksomeness of further attendance at school. It must have been a sad disappointment to this high-minded woman to find her son so averse to study, for she intended him to be a wise and useful man. She must have thought and talked a long while on the subject before she would consent to this plea. Perhaps good old Dr. Burney was consulted, and possibly he agreed with his pupil that further schooling would be profitless; and he might have suggested that Thomas would make a good specimen of the average country gentleman, and that his mother had better rest content with that.

At last the mother's scruples were overcome, and our hero left school and had all his time to himself. And now this lazy, lounging dunce was as happy as a king. He had no school duties to attend to, but could hunt or shoot, walk or ride, fish or swim, at his own sweet will; he had no dreary lessons to make a pretence to learn, and so the only books he read were flimsy novels and the weekly journals. He led the life of a free and easy country squire; he cared little for the elegancies and courtesies of

life, and perhaps the tip top of his ambition was to be a good landlord and a famous hunter.

But though so well satisfied himself with his mode of life, it was anything but satisfactory to his prudent mother. She had up to now allowed him almost absolute liberty, with the intention of giving him a certain boldness, force, and determination of character; but she now saw there was a possibility of all her plans for his future being frustrated. She wanted her son to be something more than a country squire, and so, secretly repenting her consent to his leaving school, she gradually but persistently suggested a college career. To this Thomas was most bitterly opposed. He remembered, with humiliation, his life at the Greenwich school; and now that it was proposed to substitute for that the higher studies and closer competition of a college, he shrank from the idea with dismay. He pleaded and argued with all the earnestness of a violent aversion; and when at last he saw his mother was calmly bent on carrying her point, he postponed the evil day as long as possible.

And now we come to the turning-point in our "dunce's" career. A change came over this singular youth as complete and lasting as it was sudden and unlooked for. As a sort of sugar-plum preparatory to the obnoxious dose of college study, he went to spend a few weeks at Earlham Hall, near Norwich, the seat of Mr. John Gurney, a friend and a distant connection of the family. Mr. Gurney was a widower, and his family consisted of four sons and seven daughters, of whom all except three younger boys were as old or older than our hero. His visit to this family was at first a perfect surprise to our lazy, self-satisfied "dunce." Though all had made more progress than he at school, he was astonished to find them—even the oldest—still continuing their studies. The sons were eagerly studying social and political economy, and they discussed the topics of the day with what seemed to



our hero quite statesmanlike ability. The girls were thoroughly well educated and highly accomplished. They wrought the most exquisite needlework, sketched from nature, sang and played skilfully, indulged literary tastes, and, notwithstanding all these varied occupations, found time for much charitable work. And yet with all this eagerness for knowledge there was no expression of intellectual pride, no attempt to dazzle their somewhat uncultured guest by displaying all they knew, no pretended scorn for the sports and pastimes he was so fond of. They received him to their home circle as one of themselves, their pursuits going on as if no guest were there. They admired his strength of will and the sturdy force of his character. Frequently they laid aside their studies and rambled off through the surrounding woodlands in search of sport or botanical specimens. At other times a riding party was formed, and an excursion made through the loveliest scenery of that lovely neighbourhood.

His surprise over, our "dunce's" next feelings must have been somewhat humiliating. He had hitherto regarded study as a drudgery only necessary to a professional or business career, and accomplishments and refinements as contemptible and effeminate in men. He now found study followed for the love of it, and the refined courtesies of life regarded as perfectly compatible with the noblest ambitions and the manliest pursuits. What he had thrown over as an unconquerable task these young Gurneys were studying with as much delight as he felt in novel-reading. What he had scorned as effeminate and undignified, they practised as a pleasing social duty. And yet they could hunt as eagerly, ride as gaily, and shoot and fish with as much ardour as he. They had all his sources of happiness, and an almost infinite supply besides of which he was destitute.

Associating intimately as he was day after day with this family of busy earnest workers, it was impossible

our hero should not be deeply impressed by the striking contrast between his aims and theirs. His impressions deepened into convictions, and those again grew into resolutions. By the time his visit terminated he was no longer a self-satisfied "dunce," but an eager, persevering student. He had all along plenty of determination, abundance of energy, and sufficient perseverance; but these had been lying unused, or exercised only in trivial or selfish pursuits. Like Bunyan's pilgrim at the "Interpreter's House," our hero at Earlham Hall had seen a vision of higher pursuits and nobler enterprises than any he had yet engaged in. His sojourn there inspired him with courage, fired his ambition, and discovered to his gaze aims worthy of his great natural abilities. He at once commenced a course of study, and in due time entered Trinity College, Dublin.

And now that he is a "dunce" no longer, let us see, by a few glances at his after life, how it was Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton—for that was his name—became illustrious.

He was illustrious as a self-made successful business man. It was a happy thing for young Buxton that he had been aroused to an effort to be or do something in life, for the Irish estate which was to have been the scene of his happy career as a sporting landlord was claimed by others, and lost in a lawsuit. And so, when at the age of twenty-one our friend Thomas had married Hannah, the fifth daughter of his friend Mr. Gurney, he was so circumstanced that he tells us he "longed for any employment that would produce him a hundred a year, if he had to work twelve hours a day for it." After much indecision as to what business he should attempt, he entered the employment of his uncles, Samuel and Osgood Hanbury, the celebrated brewers. He now cheerfully laid aside his beloved studies, and plunged with equal ardour into the prosy details of the counting-house. He soon made him-

self indispensable to his uncles. In three years they admitted him as a partner, and a little later made him practically manager of the whole concern. Under his direction the business prospered amazingly and profitably, but not by any grinding down of servants to starvation wages. The circumstances of the *employés* were never more comfortable, nor their social and moral interests so much considered.

He was illustrious as a Member of Parliament. In 1818, at the age of thirty, he entered the House of Commons as member for Weymouth. Instead of identifying himself with either of the political parties he gave his chief attention to matters of social interest. He worked hard to remedy the abuses of prison life and discipline, and in other ways strove to right existing wrongs. For nineteen years he represented Weymouth in Parliament, and happening at the end of that time to be defeated in the election, no fewer than twenty-seven other places eagerly offered him their representation, so anxious were they to be honoured by having so upright and honest a man for their member.

But his most illustrious labours were those directed against slavery. Quite early in his Parliamentary career he took sides with that great apostle of anti-slavery Wilberforce, and greatly helped him in his noble work. And when in 1821 age and infirmities prevented his further active labours, the father of the anti-slavery movement nominated Mr. Buxton as his successor in the work. And he, like a second Elisha, imbued with a double portion of his master's spirit, strode on undaunted by violent opposition and still more fatal indifference, until, as the crowning result of his arduous and self-sacrificing agitation, on the 1st of August, 1834, the shackles were struck off from every slave in the British dominions, and they stood forth free—free by the purchase of the English Government at the price of twenty million pounds.

His whole life was rendered illustrious by his many virtues. In all the relations of life he exhibited true Christian principles. He was kind, generous, forgiving, and charitable, but upright, judicious, and uncompromising.

In 1841 he was created a baronet, not for any political services, nor because the honour had been solicited, but simply as a mark of the high esteem in which his noble labours were held by the Government and the nation.

In 1845, at the age of fifty-nine, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton died. A few weeks afterwards a subscription was set on foot to erect a monument to his illustrious memory. The Prince Consort headed the list with a donation of £50, but other subscribers were limited to the amount of two guineas each. Remittances poured in from all parts of the country. Nor would the liberated slaves permit a memorial of their benefactor to be erected without their help. They sent more than £500, which had been collected chiefly in coppers. At length £1500 was subscribed, and a beautiful full-length marble statue was erected in Westminster Abbey. There it stands, near the monument of Wilberforce, and surrounded by the memorials of the greatest, the noblest, and the worthiest of England's dead.



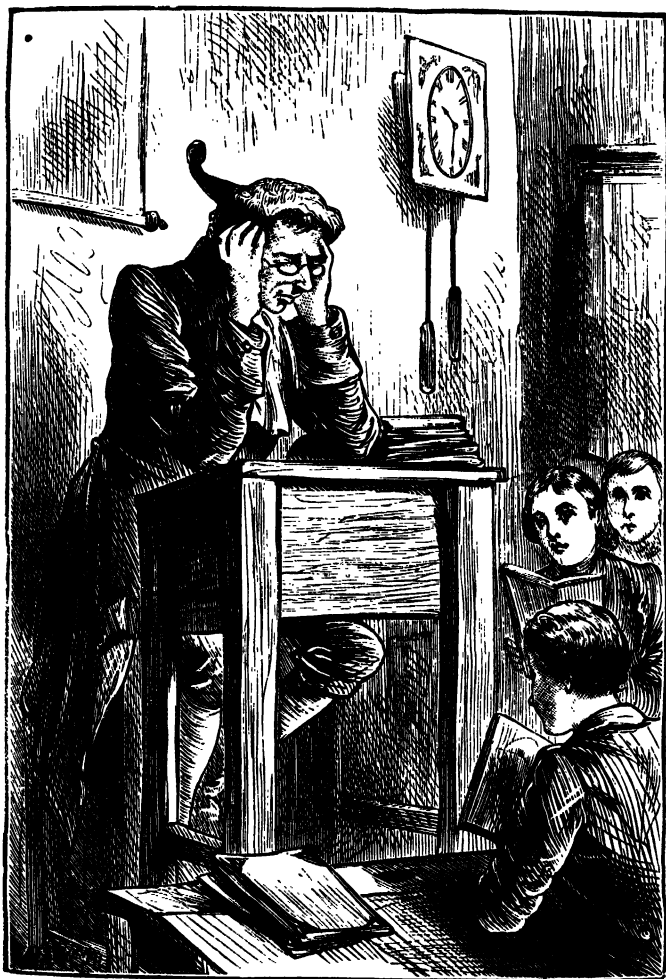


#### IV.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A ROYAL ACADEMICIAN.

**T** was a beautiful autumn afternoon about ninety years ago and the scholars of the parish school of Pitlessie, a little town in Fife, had already bounded away to their evening sports and pastimes. All had left except three or four unfortunate urchins who were being kept in for various misdemeanours, and whose punishment was considerably heightened by the merry shouts and boisterous laughter of their liberated comrades, as, borne by the gentle breeze, the tantalizing sounds were carried through the half-open windows.

With spectacles on nose, the teacher, perched on a high stool, sat at his desk, casting a stern glance now and again at his prisoners, and occupying the time he was thus obliged to wait by examining a heap of his pupils' copybooks, and filling in with a grey goose-quill of extraordinary length the many-flourished copies then so much admired.

As the grave-faced dominie took up book after book the expression of his face frequently changed. Sometimes he frowned threateningly as he saw a huge blot which had been dropped right athwart the smooth current of his fine-lined copy. Now he tore out in his rage some leaf vilely smeared, and scrawled, and crumpled, and now he



WILKIE AND THE SCHOOLMASTER.



smiled approvingly as he gave a few finishing touches to the writing of some hopeful scribe, who really had succeeded to some extent in imitating the copy.

At last he came to one which seemed to affect him differently from the rest. He did not exactly frown, though his brows were knit and his mouth puckered up in a queer fashion; and certainly he did not smile. He laid the book open before him, his head resting on both hands, his elbows on the desk and his quill pen sticking out behind his ear, while his face wore an expression of great bewilderment. At last he broke out in an impatient, perplexed whisper, "Davy, Davy, whatever will become of ye? Ye winna learn!"

Let us take a peep over his shoulder at the book which so puzzles him. It is a text-hand copybook, and on the top line of the open page is written, in the schoolmaster's bold round style, the copy—"Perseverance overcomes difficulties." The lines which follow are somewhat straggling, irregular, and incorrect, but not sufficiently faulty to account for the good dominic's perplexity; he has passed many worse specimens. A nearer inspection reveals the fact that inside the beautiful flourish which finishes the capital "P" there is a boy's face, laughing as if he enjoyed the teacher's confusion. This, then, accounts in some degree for the schoolmaster's bewilderment. When he handed that book to Davy in the morning the capital "P"—indeed, the whole copy—was a model of propriety; but instead of the young urchin trying his best to imitate his teacher's fine upstrokes and rounded curves, he has spent part of his time in dexterously drawing a lad's face among the flourishes.

Not only that, after writing a little over half the page he has filled it up with grotesque heads and faces, foremost amongst which is an almost full-length drawing of a lad with downcast eyes and doleful face, which we see at a glance is intended as a portrait of one of the sorry-looking



culprits now undergoing punishment at the bottom of the schoolroom.

This was no new source of anxiety to our friend the schoolmaster. He had pondered the matter again and again, and had tried every method he could think of to interest this lad in his studies, and all to no purpose. Hence it was that the question so perplexed him. But who was this queer schoolboy?

Davy was a lad of about ten years of age, the son of the minister of the neighbouring parish of Cults. He was a pleasant, agreeable, rather shy lad, dutiful and obedient, not given to wilful mischief, and a favourite with everyone. But nevertheless Davy was a "dunce." So said his teacher, as time after time he failed in his spelling and stumbled in his grammar lesson; so said his father, as he vainly tried to impress on his mind the necessity of paying strict attention to his books; so said everybody who in any way felt the responsibility of his education and training. Thanks to the patient, gentle teaching of his affectionate mother, he had learned to read pretty well, but beyond this it seemed as if he never would get.

What bothered the schoolmaster and all the rest of the good-meaning folks was, that our "dunce" was so different from other dunces. He was sharp enough at anything besides his lessons; and when, once in a way, he had a short fit of study, he learned even them as easily as any boy in his class. His only fault was that he would persistently be drawing. Directly a subject presented itself or a comical idea struck him, away went his lesson, and he never touched it again until he had finished what he had commenced to draw. No matter what he was using, slate and pencil, or pen, ink, and paper, he scarcely ever passed an hour without sketching something. If nothing else was at hand, he drew on the margins of his lesson-books, between the moods and tenses in his grammar, and round the multiplication-tables in his arithmetic.

He had always been a puzzle and an anxiety to his friends, for from his very earliest years he had shown a fond preference for drawing. When quite a little child his father's manse, as parsonages are called in Scotland, was visited by Lord Balgonie, who, it is said, had a nose of most extraordinary size. Little Davy was strutting about the room, taking notice of everything in his usual quiet way. At length he took up a piece of half-burnt stick from the heap of blazing heather on the hearth, and, stooping down, he commenced to draw with the charred stick on the white hearthstone. In a few seconds he called to his mother, and, pointing to what he had drawn, said, "Look, mother, look at 'Gonie's nose!" His mother's embarrassment and his lordship's amusement were about equal. The latter laughed loudly at the infantile artist, and declared the sketch a good representation of his prominent feature. A year or so later Davy almost covered the walls of the nursery with sketches of the villagers—old men in tattered clothes, shock-headed youths, horses, dogs, and cats.

Of course he soon became noted among his schoolmates for his skill in portraiture, and so great was the demand for likenesses that he had to make a charge for them. Accordingly, his schoolfellows paid him in marbles, tops, or fruit for the portraits he drew. Sometimes he would sketch a whole class standing together. He did not much care to join in the rough sports of the playground, but he liked to watch his schoolfellows romping and gaming; and he often lay at full length on the grass, sketching them on his slate as they wrestled, or raced, or jumped. He had a keen sense of humour, and he did not dislike a bit of mischief if there was some fun to be got out of it. If anything struck him as ludicrous or laughable, either in the sports of his classmates or the gambols of dogs or other animals, he was almost sure to make a drawing of it; and it is said he had a very happy way of transferring to paper the very appearances which provoked the sense of humour.

As a lad, our "dunce" was very fond of riding, and remarkably fearless. One of his favourite amusements was to go quietly behind an unsaddled horse, scramble on his back, and then gallop away at the greatest speed until the horse was tired. One day, however, he had a very dangerous fall, and this seems to have quite knocked the courage out of him, for he was ever afterwards a timid horseman.

After staying four years at the Pitlessie school, becoming year by year a more perplexing puzzle to his conscientious teacher, and a greater anxiety to his friends, our "dunce" was sent to a grammar school in the neighbouring town of Kettle. It was hoped the new teacher, the fresh associations, and the higher competition of this school would rouse him to exert himself and make some progress in study.

To some extent these hopes were realized. Our hero seems to have been more diligent in his studies, and he made considerable headway. He, however, still retained his old peculiarities. His master declared him to be the most singular scholar he ever had under his care. Notwithstanding that he made some progress in learning, Davy seems to have caused his new master almost as much anxiety as he did the teacher at Pitlessie. At one moment he would be quietly seated on the bench with his school-fellows, and apparently interested in his lesson, and the next minute his place would be empty, and he would be found stooping down behind his next neighbour, while he sketched the woe-begone face of some late comer, or pictured some other idea which had just crossed his mind.

After two years' stay at the grammar school he left, being then about fourteen years old. And now the question of his future career had to be decided upon. His friends, and especially his grandfather, were anxious that he should study for the ministry, and succeed his respected father as minister of Cults. His parents were, however,

unwilling to force their son into a profession for which he had shown no liking; and as there were two others, the army and the law, open to him, the question of choice, though often discussed, had been left open to see what would be the result of his attendance at the grammar school. And now, just as his increased application to study had fostered in the minds of his friends the hope that he might yet enter the Church, Davy disappointed them all by steadfastly declining to adopt either that or the other professions offered him. Nothing would satisfy him but that he must be an artist.

Certainly, he seemed little qualified for a village pastor. Though quiet and grave-looking enough to make any one half believe in his seriousness, there was a sly twinkle in his eye which told how quickly he saw and how keenly he relished fun and frolic. And though in other matters obedient and dutiful, he seemed to have little idea of decorum in a place of worship. If one of the hard-working farmers happened to fall asleep during service time Davy would be sure to get out his pencil, and sketch, with amusing fidelity, his back-thrown head, open mouth, and sleepy expression. And if the local nobility were present, he would convey to paper a wonderfully correct idea of the military aristocratic air of his lordship, and the stiff, prim, almost grim respectability of the old dowager. Many such portraits were scratched on the paint of the pew, and it was a fact well known to most, from the pew-opener down to the smallest lad in the choir, that the margins, spare leaves, and title-pages of Master Davy's Prayer-book and Psalter were ornamented with droll portraits of the elders, the clerk, and half the regular attendants at the church.

And then he cared nothing for the legal profession. It seemed to him a very dull and irksome thing to be writing deeds and conveyances in legal English, or appearing in court to defend any rascal who chose to pay the retainer

for one's services. If he had become a barrister we may be sure his briefs would have been pencilled over with portraits of the presiding justice, the prisoner at the bar, and the advocates on the bench, much in the same way as Tommy Traddles's legal papers were with skeletons.

As for the army, like most children, Davy liked the scarlet uniform. He had seen soldiers at Kettle, and had once attended a review at Kirkcaldy; but, though delighted by the brilliant scene, he felt no military ambition. It was only as a picture that the review interested him, and, as such, he drew it over and over again.

On the other hand, he seemed much interested in humbler spheres of labour. He was very fond of watching shoemakers at work, and would himself have followed St. Crispin's craft had his parents been willing. He also liked to look on at the weavers, and watch their busy fingers as "the shuttle merrily went flying through the loom." And at the village blacksmith's he was quite a regular attendant, and had learned to "swing the heavy sledge" with considerable skill. We can easily understand what attractions the lights and shadows of the smithy, the glowing metal, and the fiery sparks would have for this precocious young painter; and, judged by what we know of his after life, it does not seem strange to find him thus intimately associating with the humblest classes of society.

As may readily be imagined, Davy's determination not to be a minister was a sore disappointment to his grandfather, who had always hoped to see him occupy his father's pulpit. And when, in addition to rejecting the ministry, he steadfastly declined the alternative professions of the army and the law, and chose a pursuit in which competence seemed hardly probable, and eminence quite unattainable, his father sadly and reluctantly consented, though he looked on the choice as a very injudicious one. Of all Davy's relations his mother alone seems to have smiled on his choice. She, of course, in her maternal pride, rated

her son's productions marvellously high, and indulged bright dreams of his successful future.

Our hero was nothing daunted, however, by all the dark forebodings and awful warnings of his friends. He felt an irresistible impulse to be a great painter, and was conscious of the ability to become one. His artistic aspirations had been greatly strengthened by an acquaintance he had made during his stay at the grammar school. The clergyman of a neighbouring parish had a brother, who was an artist, living with him, and this young man, David Martin by name, soon heard of our hero's cleverness at sketching. He took an early opportunity of paying his namesake a visit, and, after examining a few sketches, he strongly urged him to go to Edinburgh, and become a student in one of the art schools.

Thus it was that one dull November day this tall, bashful, country lad set out for the northern metropolis with a portfolio of sketches, a bundle of clothes, and his parents' blessing. As soon as his friends had found it was useless to attempt to dissuade Davy from his intention to study art in Edinburgh, they had done all they could to insure a favourable reception for him there. It was in consequence of this that he carried with him a letter of introduction to the secretary of the Trustees Academy from Lord Leven. But instead of procuring him instant admission, as he had been led to expect it would, the secretary, after glancing carelessly over his sketches, told him he could not admit him, and sent the poor lad back, miserably disappointed, to his lodgings. Lord Leven was at once informed that Davy had been rejected, and his lordship promptly wrote to the secretary of the academy in such terms that the young artist was instantly admitted.

And now we have done with our "dunce," as such. Having at last been allowed to follow the bent of his inclinations, and to pursue the studies for which he felt

himself highly qualified, David Wilkie never again merited that title.

He did not, however, become illustrious without an effort. Genius he undoubtedly possessed, but, as he himself tells us, "the single element in all his progressive movements was persevering industry." Though so practised a hand at sketching, he was, on entering the academy, almost totally ignorant of the rules of art; and it was only by the severest application that he achieved what he did. Like some other "celebrated dunces," he had a wonderfully resolute determination, and once having decided on the end to be attained, all other considerations had to bend to the achievement of that object.

For five years he regularly attended the academy, and it is said he was always the first to enter the room and the last to leave it, so careful was he to lose none of the advantages it afforded him. And when the studies were over for the day, instead of indulging in social or convivial recreation, as did many of his fellow-students, Wilkie retired to his humble lodgings, and there continued his studies. He gave up all careless and purposeless reading, and throughout the five years scarcely looked into any book excepting his Bible and works on art. The only amusement he allowed himself was that experienced in learning to play the violin, an instrument he was always very fond of.

Having finished his course of study at the Trustees Academy, Wilkie had no other resources to fall back upon than the practice of his art; and, as the readiest way of turning it to advantage, he commenced life on his own account as a portrait-painter. His productions were generally satisfactory to his sitters, and he soon acquired local fame. But, of course, the farmers and tradesmen of Culter and Pittenweem did not want their portraits taken over and over again; so our young artist soon had to go further afield for his customers. This he did for some time, but his

success was not sufficient to reconcile him to the career of a mere portrait-painter ; nor did his ambition rest there ; it soon led him to attempt bolder artistic performances. The result was the production of his painting of "The Village Politicians," and a few smaller pieces, all of which sold sufficiently well to encourage him to proceed in his new line of art. A little later he painted a large picture of "Pitlessie Fair," which created quite a stir in his native place. In this famous picture there were represented more than a hundred of the most notable parishioners, and, to the great wonderment of these folks and their friends, none of them had been asked to sit for their portraits. At last the shocking fact crept out that the faces in the picture had been painted from sketches which Davy had taken years ago on scraps of paper during service at the church. This remarkable picture was bought by a gentleman in the neighbourhood, to whose house its fame attracted people from far and near. It was admitted to be the greatest artistic work Scotland had yet produced.

And now David Wilkie began to be illustrious. His fame spread all through his native county, and rumours of his skill had reached even as far as Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Even his relations, who had shaken their heads ominously when he set out to be a painter, were somewhat reconciled to the profession, now that they found he had made a respectable position for himself. If mere competence had been his only aim he might now have settled down contentedly in his native village. But no ; it was his art he loved ; and though for a time he had been obliged to paint to live, his real wish was to live to paint. He accordingly resolved to go to London, where, as a student at the Royal Academy, he should enjoy advantages superior to any Scotland offered.

He was only nineteen when he started—a tall, light-haired, pleasant-faced young Scotchman—to try his ability among perfect strangers in London. He had taken his



sketches and paintings with him, and from these he selected a few of the best for exhibition in the picture-dealers' windows. They soon excited attention, and sold so quickly as to relieve him of any apprehensions of starving while studying at the Academy. There the charming simplicity of his manners and his gentleness of disposition at once gained the friendship and esteem of his fellow-students.

The year after his arrival in London his picture of "The Village Politicians" found a place in the Academy Exhibition, and Wilkie was at once loudly applauded. The next year's exhibition contained another of his productions, "The Blind Fiddler," which still further increased his reputation as a painter of domestic scenes. He was now so popular an artist that he quickly sold all the pictures he could paint, and at very good prices. His great success did not unduly elate him, however; he worked steadily on, as if he had all along worked for and expected it. Every year added to his popularity, and at length, in 1811, at the age of twenty-six, he was elected a Royal Academician.

In 1826 he visited Italy, and there studied the fine examples of ancient art. Four years later he was appointed Painter in Ordinary to his Majesty King William IV., and in 1836 that monarch marked his appreciation of his talents by making him a knight. But Sir David Wilkie, Knt., was the same simple, honest, agreeable artist as before the conferring of these well-deserved distinctions.

In the delineation of the humorous and pathetic sides of domestic life no artist has been more successful than Sir David Wilkie. Though a "dunce" at school, he has made for himself an illustrious name. His paintings have again and again been reproduced by the engraver, and in every case the general public thus appealed to has confirmed the judgment of the critics by their appreciation of his works.



## V.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A PHILOSOPHER.

**M**ORE than two hundred years ago there lived with his grandmother, in the little village of Wools-thorpe, in Lincolnshire, a rather odd, quaint boy. Little Isaac—for that was the lad's name—was of respectable parentage. His father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfathers without number had been farmer squires in the village, and for hundreds of years his ancestors had resided at the old manor house.

Isaac's father had died a few months before his birth; his mother had married again and gone to reside with her husband, the rector of a neighbouring parish; and so the little fellow had been left to the care of his grandmother, who seems to have been very fond of him.

He was a very weakly child. At his birth he was so frail and puny that everyone thought he would quickly follow his father to the grave. And though careful nursing had enabled him to override the dangers of infancy, he was still so delicate as to set the old women of the village prophesying that he would never live to be a man; and so different from other boys as to make them say, as they shook their heads wisely, "He's far too wise to be long for this world."

Isaac and his grannie seem to have suited each other

very well. He doubtless had as much influence over her as grandchildren usually have over old ladies, and he appears to have been allowed to do very much as he pleased. No doubt the good old soul made a great fuss of her old-fashioned, weakly grandson; and we may be sure she kept him well supplied with cakes, tarts, and other toothsome delicacies; and always took care he was warmly dressed and well muffled up in the winter, so as if possible to falsify the predictions of the gossips, who said he could never be reared.

Like all the other gossips, those of Woolsthorpe doubtless talked very often without much reason for what they said; but in this case it certainly did seem very probable that their words would come true. Isaac was a very thin, pale, delicate, grave-faced lad, and seemed to have none of the vigour or vivacity of boyhood in him. He scarcely ever played with the boys of the village or with the lads at school. They were much too rough for him. He had neither the strength to join in nor the spirit to enjoy their boisterous romps and noisy games.

And yet he was not a sulking, moping lad. He kept apart from his fellows because he could not enter heartily into their sports. Nor must it be concluded that he was a diligently studious scholar, and that even during play-time he was learning tables and working sums. On the contrary, Isaac seems to have given little attention to his lessons. Perhaps grannie magnified his attainments, and was quite satisfied with his progress. If so, she must have been the only one who held so high an opinion of him, for he was nearly always at the bottom of the class, and though the teacher scolded and his classmates ridiculed, there he seemed perfectly content to remain.

Perhaps the strongest reason why Isaac was so often alone was that he had a source of amusement which absorbed nearly all his thoughts and occupied all his leisure time, and which he could indulge in without a companion.

He had somehow got hold of a few carpenter's tools, and had so practised with them that he could use the gimlet or the screw, the saw or the plane, quite cleverly.

We are all familiar with the curiosity which prompts children to inquire how things are made. We know Mary Jane will not be quite satisfied with her new doll until she has found out what makes her cry when squeezed, and that Bob will not be content to go on playing his toy-concertina until he has found out where the sound comes from. In this respect our young friend Isaac was like other children; indeed, his curiosity was greater, and harder to satisfy, than that of most.

But even in this there was a difference, which marked him out as a very singular lad. Most children ruin their toys in the attempt to gratify their curiosity. By the time Mary Jane has found the location of the doll's lungs, the poor thing's sawdust constitution is generally ruined beyond repair; and Master Bob is sure to sit down and have a good cry because the sound won't come out of his concertina; now that he knows where it comes from.

Not so Isaac. Not only could he take things to pieces, he could put them together again with wonderful skill. And so it was that while his teacher was frowning at him for his carelessness in the class, and thinking him a "dunce" for being always at the bottom, his schoolfellows were thinking him one of the cleverest lads they had ever known, since he could mend their toys and make them even stronger than they were at first. No wonder Isaac was a "dunce." All his thoughts out of school, and a great many of his thoughts while there, were fixed on his little stock of tools and the things he was making with them.

And not only did our hero show his ingenuity in repairing toys, he actually made new ones from designs of his own. He had nearly always on hand some bit of machinery made of wood. He constructed many toys worked by

water-wheels, which he could fix on the margin of the brook. He also made little rafts and boats, with sails and rudders so arranged that, by a careful study of the wind, he could sail them in almost any direction he wished. By diligent study he learnt the secret of the peculiar noise made by humming-tops, and then at once set about increasing the humming power by cutting holes and notches in them.

He was never happier than when sitting in his grandmother's kitchen, or, if it were summer time, in some quiet nook by the side of the river Witham, fashioning a new boat or making some improvement in a water-wheel. At such times he was studious after his fashion. He would sit for hours with a very thoughtful expression of face, and now driving a nail, and then whittling the wood with his pocket-knife. But this was the only kind of study he cared for. He must have made some attempt, however, to learn his lessons, for he was never wilful or disobedient; but how little attention he gave to them is evident from the fact that he rarely removed more than two or three places from the bottom of the class.

Possibly he might always have remained a "dunce," but for a circumstance which at first sight would seem the least likely to inspire him with a desire to learn. Isaac, like most thoughtful, retiring lads, was somewhat timid. Perhaps his "grannie" had taken rather too much care of him. At any rate, he was one of those frightened little fellows who will stand a great deal of persecution from others.

Now, just above Isaac in the class was a somewhat bigger lad—a rough, bullying little tyrant—who soon found that his grannie-reared little classmate might be safely dominated over and ordered about. He accordingly treated him very badly, as all cowardly, bullying lads do when they find a younger lad who cannot defend himself. So young Isaac had to do what his bigger school-

fellow ordered him. He had to fetch and carry for him, and submit to his sneers and insults. The timid little fellow bore this for a long time meekly. He must many a time have felt inclined to tell his teacher of the tyranny exercised over him, but he had probably all an English schoolboy's dislike to tale-bearing. As for resisting his oppressor's authority, that was out of the question; it would only have resulted in a fight, and he knew he was no match for the other in size or strength.

On one occasion this cowardly bully, encouraged by Isaac's timid submission, and as if desirous to see how far he could domineer over the little fellow, passed from insult to personal violence, and cruelly kicked him in the stomach. The pain was intense, and did for Isaac what all his previous persecutions had failed to do—it roused him to revenge. But not revenge such as the infliction would seem likely to suggest. He did not turn round, roll up his sleeves, and challenge his schoolfellow to fight it out. That mode of revenge does not seem to have suggested itself for a moment; but seeing that he would have been sure of a flogging if he had attempted to fight, we cannot give him credit for much magnanimity on that score. He did not even get some bigger lad, whose favour he had propitiated by a present of a boat, to enter into combat as his champion. Nor did he try to get his persecutor a thrashing by reporting him to the teacher, though an appeal to the powers that be would have been amply justified even in a schoolboy's mind by such brutal treatment as he had received.

From his earliest childhood Isaac had been remarkable for gentleness of disposition and good-heartedness, and the way in which he chose to take his revenge in this case was just what might have been expected from such a lad. It seems, however, about as far out of his power as the ability to personally chastise his assailant.

This lad—cowardly bully as he was—stood higher than

Isaac in the class, and had always held that position. Now, our hero thought if he could only get beyond and above him, so that during school hours he might look down on him from a superior position, the lad would not be so likely to domineer over him in the playground. And even if he did continue to play the tyrant there the brave little fellow felt that he could better bear his subordination out of doors if in school the case was reversed.

He accordingly set his mind on the accomplishment of this purpose. Tops, water-wheels, and boats, though as bewitching as ever, were for a time resolutely laid aside, and a large slice of his leisure time was devoted to his lessons. It was a hard struggle for him, for he had not only the same lessons to learn as the boy he was trying to outstrip, but he had much lost time to make up for. He, however, steadily pursued his course, and gradually began to contest the place of precedence with his persecutor. Sometimes he got above him and maintained his position for a day, and then on the next some unlooked-for question would cause his fall, and the bigger lad would take his old place with a sneer at Isaac's dulness. But our hero was not discouraged, and in due time, steady, unremitting application enabled him permanently to retain his place above his former tyrant.

And did he now relax his energy, and become as careless as before? No. Possibly he was afraid to do so, lest he should lose his place. Perhaps he got to like going up in his class; it certainly was pleasanter than being always among the "dunces" at the bottom. At any rate, whatever might have been his motive, it is certain that he still persevered until he mounted high above his tormentor, and at length reached and held against all competitors the highest place in the class.

And now Isaac was a "dunco" no longer, so far at least as regards his school learning. The kick of his tyrant classmate was to him what the harsh threat of his teacher

was to Adam Clarke—it was the turning-point in his career.

At the age of twelve Isaac was sent to live with a surgeon at Grantham, so that he might attend the public school in that town. Here he was spoken of as a “sober, silent, thinking lad.” He seems to have progressed favourably with his studies, and showed a great fondness for books. It must not be thought, however, that he had jumped all at once from mechanical playthings to mathematical problems. He was still as fond as ever of working with his little stock of tools.

During his stay at Grantham it happened that a windmill was being built on a hill at a little distance from the school, and this so interested him that he went every day during the dinner-time to watch how it was made. He so closely marked every part of the machinery and construction that he was able to make a model of it in wood. When he had completed this little wonder of mechanism he set it up on the top of the surgeon’s house, where, to his great delight, the sails went gaily round with the wind, just like the sails of the one he had copied it from.

Having been so successful in constructing this model, he soon made another windmill, which, however, was not to be worked by wind, but by animal power. In order to work this he had to catch a mouse, which he called the miller, and then set him loose in a little apartment provided for him. The little animal’s frightened attempts to get away would then set in motion a toothed wheel, by which the sails were sent spinning round as if blown by a strong wind. In addition to these two copies from a machine which he had seen, this wonderful lad had the ingenuity to construct a clock worked by water, though he had never seen one before. This little machine kept time admirably, and was used by the surgeon at Grantham long after Isaac had left school.

And we must not forget another of this lad’s inven-



tions, for it was he who introduced the flying of paper kites. He studied the kite scientifically, discovered the best shape for the frame, the length of the tail and the best mode of attaching the string. He had just enough of mischief in his constitution to cause him to take a pleasure in alarming the simple country-folks by flying kites at night with lighted lanterns attached to them. These the frightened rustics took for meteors or comets, and many were the guesses as to what such strange appearances in the heavens might portend.

At the age of fifteen Isaac was recalled from school, in order that he might look after his mother's farm. Her second husband had died and she had returned to her old home at Woolsthorpe.

At one time a summons to leave school for good would doubtless have been very agreeable to Isaac's feelings; but not so now. During the three years spent at Grantham he had developed a wonderful passion for books and for scientific study, and he felt deeply the exchange of his delightful pursuits for the uninteresting occupation of farming. Dutiful and obedient, however, as he had always been, he tried to conceal his dislike for the new occupation, and returned from school with as good grace as possible.

But though he doubtless intended to do his duty in his new position, he gave very little satisfaction to his friends. While he was a "dunce" at school, they must have had some grave misgivings as to his future; but since he had made such steady progress they had felt quite reassured, and believed he would yet become a worthy descendant of a long line of farmer squires. But before he had attended to the management of the farm a single month they thought him a bigger dunce than ever.

To the utter astonishment of these good country-folks, they found that, though wondrously clever at figures, this young farmer could not estimate the weight or value of a sheep, and no doubt they expressed in no mild way their

scorn for such "school-learning." Isaac never seemed to take any great interest in his crops or his cattle. If a neighbour called on him to talk over the damage done to a part of his crops by excessive rain, he would most likely find him working some difficult mathematical problem, and totally indifferent with respect to either rain or damage. If he were out looking after his cattle he would be almost sure to sit down in the corner of the meadow and make some model, while the cows might break through the fence into the wheat or stray away wherever they pleased.

Saturday was market-day at Grantham, and thither Isaac had to go almost every week, accompanied by a trusty servant. Sometimes there was grain to be offered for sale, and often stock to be bargained for, and it was hoped the young farmer might ere long become so acquainted with his business as to be able to attend to these matters on his own responsibility. But instead of looking after his mother's affairs, as he was expected, he would just have his horse put into the stable at the Saracen's Head, and then, forgetting market and grain and stock, he would run off to his old lodgings, and there sit reading some dry old book until the servant came to tell him the business was all despatched.

Of course with a youth so truthful as Isaac it was not long before his strange inattention to business matters became the subject of family gossip. His relations knit their brows and shook their heads ominously at such an unaccountable dislike for what they considered the highest avocation of life; while the most hopeful of them tried to persuade themselves that the lad would ultimately get the better of his silly fondness for books and in time come to take a pleasure in agricultural pursuits.

One day, one of his uncles, the minister of a neighbouring parish, happened in his rambles to find Isaac seated under the hedge by the roadside, deeply engaged with a book,

and quite unconscious of his approach. He had doubtless heard of his absurd preference for books, and therefore felt curious to know what class of literature had such a powerful attraction for his nephew. The old gentleman accordingly stooped down, and was amazed to find the book this young farmer was so closely studying was a book of mathematical problems. He was now quite convinced that this shy, reserved, and thoughtful lad was something altogether out of the common order, and as he walked on he became persuaded it was only wasting his great abilities to restrict him to the life of a farmer.

He took an early opportunity of calling on Isaac's mother, and the result of his arguments with her was that the studious boy was at once packed off back to the school at Grantham to renew his much-loved studies. After a few months there, the happy youth went to Cambridge, and entered Trinity College.

From this time Isaac Newton devoted his whole energy to the study of natural science in its various branches. Of his various discoveries and inventions it is almost unnecessary to speak: like his name, they are well known wherever the English language is spoken. It may just be noted, however, that he was the first to announce the fact that light was composed of rays of various hues. His improvements in the grinding of glass lenses enabled astronomers to inquire more deeply into the secrets of the nightly firmament. From the simple fact of an apple falling from a tree in his orchard, he was led to think out the mighty law of gravitation which he afterwards expounded. He also made many improvements in the mode of astronomic measurement.

He was acknowledged as the foremost man of his age in scientific pursuits, and was highly honoured by his university. In the year 1705 he was knighted by Queen Anne.

On the 20th of March, 1727, he died—the frail, delicate

had having attained the great age of eighty-five years. His remains rest in Westminster Abbey, where a splendid monument bears testimony to his greatness.

Throughout his whole career this great philosopher exemplified the same principles of gentleness and integrity which characterized his youth; and though fully aware of the vast importance of his discoveries, so great was his modesty and so high his anticipations of researches yet to be made, that he remarked a short time before his death: —“I know not what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”





## VI.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT COMMANDER.

**I**N the parish of Moreton Say, near Market Drayton, Shropshire, there is an estate called Styche, which for more than five hundred years belonged to the successive heirs of one family. The estate was but small, and though its undisturbed possession through so many generations enabled its possessor to rank among the gentry of the county, the other branches of the family were compelled to look for support to agriculture, trade, or the more aristocratic pursuits of law or medicine.

Hence it was that a little more than a hundred and fifty years ago, its owner having died without heirs, the inheritance passed to his brother, a gentleman who, not having anticipated such good fortune, was in practice as an attorney. The new owner of Styche did not, however, at once cut his connection with his profession and settle down as a country squire. The income he derived from the estate was only about £500 a year, and he did not deem that sufficient to induce him to retire from practice. He accordingly married, took up his abode at the ancestral manor-house, and continued to act as an attorney.

It was quite as well that the lawyer did not at once give up the exercise of his profession, for he was blessed

with an unusually large family, consisting of six sons and seven daughters, and to rear and educate these in a way suitable to their position must have required all the combined income of his estate and his practice.

The eldest of these children, Robert, and of course the heir to the family property, was born in the old manor-house, September 25, 1725. For some reason or other he was sent before he was three years of age to live with an uncle named Bayley, who resided at Hope Hall, near Manchester. His uncle and aunt seem to have treated him with the greatest kindness, and through a dangerous illness, which attacked him directly after his arrival, they nursed him with great tenderness.

From his earliest infancy little Bob seems to have occasioned his relations a great deal of anxiety by the stubbornness of his will and the fury of his temper. His uncle's letters to his anxious parents in Shropshire relate that while ill he bore his sufferings with really wonderful calmness, but directly he began to get well he became proportionately cross and impatient.

By the time he was seven years old he had gained a very unenviable reputation for quarrelling and fighting. In one of his letters his uncle says of him, "He has just had a new suit of clothes, and promises by his reformation to deserve them. I am satisfied that his fighting, to which he is out of measure addicted, gives to his temper a fierceness and imperiousness that he flies out upon every trifling occasion. For this reason I do what I can to suppress the hero, that I may help forward the more valuable qualities of meekness, benevolence, and patience."

It is not surprising that a lad so much given to fighting, and so regardless of authority, should be a dunce. As heir to the estate, his father was of course wishful that his eldest son should have the education of a gentleman. He also intended that he should follow his own profession, at any rate, until he came into possession.

He accordingly sent him to one school after another, in the hope of at last finding a teacher who would be able in some measure to curb his son's wilfulness and drive into his obstinate head the rudiments of learning.

Our "dunce" was first sent to a school at Lostock, in Cheshire, but he left it before he was eleven years of age without having made anything out. Dr. Easton, the master, however, is said to have prophesied that "if his scholar lived to be a man, and opportunity for the exertion of his talents were afforded, he would win for himself a name second to few in history." On what the good doctor based his prophecy it is impossible for us now to learn, but up to that time the only name Bob seemed likely to make for himself was anything but a creditable one.

After leaving Lostock he came nearer home, and was placed under the tuition of the Rev. Mr. Burslem, at Market Drayton, and here he became even more notorious. If he had been stupid and unruly before, he now became a confirmed dunce and a hopeless reprobate. He seems not to have had the least fear of his reverend tutor, nor indeed of any one else.

He became the leader and companion of all the rough idle lads of the town. Not that he associated with them on terms of equality; he merely ruled them and engaged them to carry out his designs. With this set of young vagabonds at his back, the young rogue played such tricks on the peaceful inhabitants that he became quite a nuisance and a terror. Doors were rapped mysteriously at night, shutters forcibly opened, windows broken, water-butts overturned, and all kinds of mischief done in order to give sport for this daring young scapegrace. The tradesmen of the town were in such dread of Robert and his marauders that they hardly dared expose their goods outside their shops; if they did the articles ran a great risk of being run away with or upset into the gutter.

It was of no use for the persecuted shopkeepers to threaten or attempt to punish their tormentors. Such proceedings only brought on them renewed and increased annoyance. One instance is related which also illustrates the lad's promptness of action. One of the shopkeepers having given Robert and his crew some special offence, they decided to punish him by turning into his shop all the dirty water which was streaming down the town gutter. They accordingly got a quantity of turf, and, unobserved by the tradesman, made a dam opposite his house. Down came the filthy stream, and the flood made by the turf rose higher and higher up the kerbstone, until just as the stream was nearly high enough to overflow into the obnoxious tradesman's shop, the weight of the water proved too great for the dam, and the turf seemed likely to give way. This was more than Robert could bear. He could not stand calmly by and see all their labour thrown away. So he shouted hasty orders to his ragged followers to fetch more turf, and then deliberately laid down in the gutter, planting his back firmly against the threatened dam, and thus keeping it intact until more turf was brought. He then got up, and, utterly regardless of the filthy state of his dress, heartily enjoyed the mischief he had caused.

There were, of course, no policemen in those days, and the watchmen and constables in most country towns were men too old and feeble for other occupation. It was, therefore, of little use for the tradesmen of Market Drayton to appeal to the guardians of the peace for protection from their persecutors. Doubtless the constables had fallen in for their full share of annoyance, for it is likely enough Bob and his fellows were quite aware of the then popular prank of upsetting the watchbox with its tenant inside. And so, since force or authority could not be brought to bear on these lawless youngsters, diplomacy was tried, and many of the shopkeepers purchased freedom



from annoyance by paying tribute of apples or halfpence to the young marauders.

The parish church of Market Drayton is an ancient Gothic structure built on the edge of a hill. A few feet from the top of the steeple there is—or was in our hero's day—a stone spout in the shape of a dragon's head. Well, one day there was a tremendous excitement down the main street, scores of people were out at their front doors, while all who could leave their houses were hurrying off towards the church. A report had spread that there was a lad on the top of the church steeple, and as the marvel increased in travelling, by the time the news reached the far end of the town, it was half believed that the lad was standing on his head on the point of the vane. There was little need to ask who it was. There was only one lad in Market Drayton likely to attempt such a hair-brained adventure, "Daring Bob," was the answer to every query, and "I thought as much," was the invariable comment of the inquirer.

Yes, there he was sure enough. He had ascended inside the tower to the top, and had then let himself down over the parapet on to the dragon's head, and there he sat astride the spout, apparently well satisfied to have created such a commotion. What a hubbub there was in the churchyard! There were timid women shading their eyes with their hands as they looked up now and again at the young rascal, while they indulged at intervals in minute and sensational imaginings of what would happen if the daring lad should become giddy or if his foot should slip. There was the stout, red-faced old beadle, puffing and perspiring and mopping his face with his big red handkerchief, and now and again shaking his fist at the lad, and threatening what he would do if he did not come down at once. Occasionally some shopkeeper, who had suffered much at Bob's hands, muttered his opinion that if the rascal broke his precious neck it would be a good

thing for all parties. Here and there men in their shirt-sleeves were discussing the advisability of ascending the tower, and dropping a noose from the parapet round the young rogue's body, and so rescuing him whether he would or no. And in one corner of the graveyard, standing on the highest of the tombstones, were a few of Bob's school-fellows, in whose countenances admiration of his courage and fear for his safety were equally apparent.

At last, after having surveyed the country from his new position as long as he cared, Bob quietly turned round on the dragon's neck, and, amidst the almost breathless silence of the crowd, pulled himself up over the parapet wall and descended in safety.

But what could it be which had tempted this youngster to such a dangerous venture? It was merely a small flat stone which, on previous visits to the tower, he had perceived in the dragon's mouth. He thought this stone would be just the thing to jerk along the water and thus make "ducks and drakes;" and so for this slight cause he risked his life, and suspended the greater part of the business of the town.

What Mr. Burslem thought of his pupil is not recorded. It is certain, however, that while Bob made such a stir and commotion by his conduct out of doors, he failed to distinguish himself in the class-room. He was still a great dunce, and so his father determined to try what another change of school would do for him. He was doubtless informed of his son's mischievous tricks, and of the low, rough company he had surrounded himself with. He therefore resolved to send him where he would be safe from such influences. He accordingly got him admitted to Merchant Taylors' School in London, where the strict rules in force, and the rigid discipline maintained, prevented him getting into any further mischief than such as could be indulged in the school-house or the playground.

We may be sure, however, our reckless young dunce would find plenty of opportunity to indulge his fearless love of mischief and adventure. His domineering spirit would doubtless soon assert itself, and a number of personal combats would be sure to follow the new boy's attempt to assume the commandership of the playground. Certain it is that his progress in learning under his new circumstances was by no means satisfactory to his father; and so, after a short stay at Merchant Taylors' School, he was fetched away, and placed at a private academy at Hemel Hempstead, under the tutorship of a Mr. Sterling.

As has been remarked, Robert was intended by his father for the legal profession, but his utter dislike for that or any kindred pursuit, and the slight progress he had made in education, compelled him to abandon the idea. His future must at this time have caused his father much anxiety and apprehension. He was now nearly eighteen years of age, without any prospects, and with only very slender qualifications for any position, while his father's large family rendered it impossible for him to maintain him in respectable idleness. Moreover, his singularity of temper rendered his circumstances more awkward still. At each of the schools he had attended he had become notorious for his domineering disposition, and for his daring defiance of danger or discipline; and all his masters—agreeing in one point—declared him to be “the most unlucky boy” they ever had in their schools.

In the midst of all the anxiety for Robert's future, his father got the offer, for his scapegrace son, of a writership in the service of the East India Company, and this he eagerly accepted for him. Poor Bob does not seem much to have relished the idea of being shipped off to India, where, judging by his reckless venturesomeness, he was far more likely to be eaten by tigers, or to die of fever, than to make a fortune. But it was his only chance, and he was too proud to beg off. The family did not expect

any good of him, but they thought the stern control of perfect strangers in a far off-land might do the headstrong lad good, while it certainly could do him no more harm than idly loafing about at home.

And so, early in the spring of 1743, this "ne'er-do-weel" of eighteen set sail for Madras, leaving behind his home, his friends, and all the associations of his childhood, and affected thereby more deeply than any of his friends believed or than he cared to own. The ship in which he set sail was detained at Brazil, and again at the Cape of Good Hope, and at length, after a voyage of nearly eighteen months, the poor exile reached Madras in the autumn of 1744.

In consequence of the length of the voyage, the poor lad had been compelled to spend all his ready money, and when he landed he was penniless. As if that were not enough of misfortune, he found to his dismay that the only person in India who knew anything of him, and to whom he had letters of introduction, had set sail and returned to England. In these straits he was compelled to borrow money on extortionate terms from the captain of the ship.

His early experiences of Indian life were anything but enviable. True, he had a situation provided for him, and so far he was removed from actual want. But he was alone among the hundreds of English residents, and his shyness and pride hindered him from making friends among his fellow clerks. His salary was very small, for though the head clerks lived like lords, and by private trading made fortunes in a few years, the juniors found it no easy matter to meet the heavy expenses which life in India necessitated. No wonder, then, that this proud, restless, defiant lad detested his monotonous occupation, chafed against the restraints and humiliations of his subordinate position, and in his solitude fell into the deepest depression of spirits. He seems to have been constitu-

tionally predisposed to melancholy, for he was subject to its gloom throughout his whole life.

Scapegrace and reprobate as Robert had been, he was not without affection for his intimate friends, and he often occupied his leisure in writing to them. These letters show with what tenderness the friendless boy remembered the scenes and companions of his boyhood, and how much he missed them in India. In one of his letters he says, "I have not enjoyed one happy day since I left my native country." On one occasion his melancholy so overcame him that he retired to his room determined to commit suicide. He twice snapped a loaded pistol at his head, but it did not go off. A fellow clerk happening to call in directly after it, he asked him to fire the pistol through the open window. He did so, when it instantly went off with a loud report. The strange coincidence inspired Robert with superstitious hope, and he exclaimed, "I feel that I am reserved for some end."

And now let us leave the headstrong, domineering, roguish dunce, Bob, and look at Robert, Lord Clive, the brave general, the clever politician, and the founder of our Indian Empire. The twain are but one.

At the time that Robert Clive was shipped off to Madras, the East India Company was merely an association of merchants who traded on the coast by permission of the native princes, at whose mercy all their rights and property were held, and to whom they paid heavy tribute.

Twenty years afterwards the Company was the undisputed possessor of vast tracts of country, and held all sovereignty, except the name, over nearly fifteen millions of people. All this had been accomplished by the astuteness, the enterprise, and the bravery of Robert Clive. With an almost prophetic foresight he had taken advantage of the domestic quarrels of the native potentates, and having formed his plans he had resolutely worked them out in the

face of all opposition, and at times notwithstanding distinct instructions to the contrary.

In the second year of his residence in India war broke out, and Clive at once joined the small and badly-disciplined military force the Company was allowed to keep to guard their property. His bravery and coolness in action soon raised him to the rank of captain, and his memorable siege of Arcot in 1751 caused his fame to reach even to England. As may be imagined, his father was as much delighted as he was surprised at his son's unexpected successes. On first hearing of his triumphs he laughingly remarked, "The booby had some sense after all."

In 1753 Captain Clive paid a visit to this country, bringing with him his wife, an English lady whom he had married at Madras. Honours were liberally bestowed on the Indian hero, and the Court of Directors of the East India Company presented him with a commission as Colonel of his Majesty's forces.

In the year 1755 Colonel Clive again went to India, and during the next five years achieved even greater triumphs both of war and of diplomacy. On his return to England again in 1760 he was graciously received by George III. and his Queen, and was created an Irish peer, under the title of Lord Clive, Baron of Plassey. He now entered Parliament, and fully purposed to spend the rest of his days in England. But affairs in India got into confusion, and he again went out in 1764 at the earnest request of the Company, who invested him with almost limitless authority for the reformation of the whole Indian service. This he achieved with all the vigour and unswerving independence of his nature, and returned home in 1767, his health having entirely broken down.

His last days were clouded by the persistent persecution of those whom he had made his enemies by his uncompromising reforms; his natural despondency deepened into perpetual gloom. His pains became so violent that

he had to take opium constantly for their relief, and on the 22nd of November, 1774, the melancholy man ended his miseries by suicide.

Much may be said in censure of Lord Clive and much in praise. We look in vain in his character for the milder and gentler virtues. He was imperious, stern, and inflexible ; but he was upright, brave, and generous. When temptation was strongest, and when such an act would have escaped censure, he never sacrificed the public welfare to his own aggrandisement. If he acquired great wealth, it was gained in perfect conformity to the customs of the country and the traditions of the service ; and he was most profuse in his generosity to all who had the remotest claim on his sympathy. Terrible and invincible in war, he never needlessly provoked a battle ; and while seeking as his own aim the prosperity of the Company, he always respected as far as possible the traditions, customs, and dignities of the native population.

War always presents a revolting picture, and to subject the people of one country to the rule of another nation seems arbitrary and cruel. But as long as nations settle disputes by the sword, and as long as the right of conquest is maintained, so long will Lord Clive be retained in "illustrious" memory as the man who gave to England her vast empire in India. Lord Macaulay, speaking of our hero, says, "From Clive's first visit to India dates the renown of the English arms in the East ; from his second visit to India dates the political ascendancy of the English in that country ; from his third visit to India dates the purity of the administration of our Eastern Empire."



## VII.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT PHILANTHROPIST.

**T**HERE is a very natural and almost universal curiosity to know all we can of the private lives of persons who have made themselves famous for their genius, their bravery, or their goodness. We like to hear of their personal peculiarities and their social characteristics. And no small share of this curiosity is directed to their childhood and youth. It is most encouraging for us ordinary mortals to know that at one time the profound philosopher was a blundering schoolboy, that the gifted poet once had to learn his alphabet, that the subtle statesman was more than once outwitted at marbles, and that the reverend divine occasionally received, and oftener deserved, a good flogging.

But while our curiosity on these points is so general, the means for gratifying it are by no means equally available. Of some of our most immortal worthies all we know is that they lived and wrote, or spoke, or fought. In some cases they lived at so remote a period that the recorded facts of their lives are shadowy as legendary lore. Others of obscure origin lived and died unhonoured and unloved, and before an ungrateful posterity had awakened to appreciate their worth, all but their names had been forgotten; while others, from sheer modesty and



self-depreciation, have, while living, discouraged all attempts to secure a reliable record of their lives. .

It is to this latter class that the subject of our present sketch belongs. So scanty are the records of his early life that it is impossible to say exactly where or when he was born, even the year when that event happened being uncertain. Of his school days and youth we know scarcely anything. One fact, however, is recorded, and that a fact which accounts for the admission of his portrait to our gallery of celebrated men—he was a “dunce.”

Our hero, who bore the common but grand old Christian name of John, is supposed to have been born about the year 1727, at Clapton, in the parish of Hackney, near London. His father was an upholsterer and carpet warehouseman in business in Smithfield, but he had amassed a large fortune, and shortly after our hero's birth he retired from business. It is said he was by religious profession a rigid Calvinist, and that although wealthy he was somewhat penurious. The house in which John first saw the light was a very old mansion which had been in the possession of the family for two or three generations. From these particulars it will be seen that John was descended of respectable parents, although it may not be true, as is asserted by some, that his pedigree could be traced back to the ducal house of Norfolk.

Whether our hero's mother died shortly after her son's birth, or whether she merely conformed to the prevailing custom in well-to-do families of nursing by proxy, cannot now be decided; but it is stated on good authority that soon after his birth John was sent to a small farm of his father's at Cardington, near Bedford, where he was nursed by the wife of one of the tenants.

In due time John was of course sent to school. His first tutor was a Mr. Samuel Worsley, who kept an academy at Hertford. As has been said, our hero's father was by religion a Calvinist, and it was perfectly natural

that he should choose for his son's tutor a man of the same religious opinions as himself. Mr. Worsley held a high reputation for his moral and religious character, and his school was largely patronized by the wealthy Dissenters of London and the district. What other qualifications he had for teaching we cannot now say. The question has been somewhat warmly disputed by our hero's biographers. One says he was extremely deficient in ability, and that John was only sent to his school because of his happening to be of the same religious persuasion as his father. Another warmly denies this, and asserts that the tutor was a man of considerable learning, and author of a Latin grammar, and also of a translation of the New Testament.

Both his biographers, however, agree in this, that when, after seven years' tuition, John left Mr. Worsley's care, he was almost as great a dunce as before, and "not fully taught any one thing." This agreement may perhaps help to explain their differences. They both admired—almost worshipped—our hero, but finding him leaving school after seven years' study without a sound education, the one jumps to the conclusion that it must have been the teacher's fault, while the other more wisely suggests that the fault probably lay in the scholar's inattention or want of application.

Since Mr. Worsley had failed to give John anything like a suitable education, the lad was removed to a superior school in London. Now, whatever doubt there might be as to Mr. Worsley's abilities, there can be no question that our hero's new teacher—Mr. John Eames—was well qualified to give him a sound and thorough education. He too was, of course, a Calvinist, but he was also a man of extensive learning, and a universal scholar. Dr. Watts once characterized him as the most learned man he ever knew. He had been educated for the ministry, but his diffidence and bashfulness were so

great, that after one attempt to preach, he gave up the idea, and resolved to use his abilities in the training of others. And in this he was eminently successful.

How long our hero remained under Mr. Eames's care is not recorded, but whether his stay in his school was long or short, its great advantages must have been wasted on him. Even the commoner branches of education appear to have been neglected by him, and the classics seem never to have engaged his attention. One of his biographers, and a very intimate friend, says of him that he "was never able to speak or write his native language with grammatical correctness, and that his acquaintance with other languages (the French perhaps excepted) was slight and superficial."

Our hero having now finished his education (if such a term may be used when he had not mastered any one branch of study), it might have been expected of a wealthy man like his father that he would grant him a considerable yearly allowance, and permit him to occupy himself as he wished. But a hundred and fifty years ago parents, if not wiser, were certainly more cautious than they generally are now, and lads were treated as lads. John's father was a manufacturer, and though he was wealthy, that wealth had doubtless been earned by incessant attention to business and the closest application. He had therefore no sympathy with idleness and ease, but believed it was "good for a man that he should bear the yoke in his youth." And accordingly he apprenticed his son to a firm of wholesale grocers in the city of London.

It has been suggested that it was the father's penuriousness which induced him to apprentice our hero to a business; and we may be sure he would not have liked the idea of his son living upon and spending the fortune he had amassed without his making any effort to increase it. But however niggardly in his general disposition, he seems to have been most liberal in this matter of his son's

apprenticeship. He paid with him a premium of £700, arranged that he should have separate apartments for his use, and allowed him sufficient money to enable him to keep a servant and a couple of saddle-horses.

Such circumstances, one might imagine, would have reconciled any one to the most irksome of occupations ; but not so with John. He seems to have been no fonder of business than he had previously been of study, and he was probably as great a "dunce" in the warehouse as he had been at school. So great was his dislike to the business, that on his father's death, when he had just attained his twenty-first year, he made arrangements with his employers, and bought from them the remainder of his time.

Although he was now of age, he had not yet come into his share of his father's fortune, for by will he was hindered from inheriting it until his twenty-fourth year. He was, however, allowed by the executors to take a considerable share in the management of that part of the property to which as the only son he was sole heir. He accordingly spent much of his time in superintending the repairing of the old mansion at Clapton, which his father had allowed to fall into decay rather than spend money on it.

An anecdote is told of this period of his life which is valuable, as showing that he thus early gave evidence of a benevolent disposition. During the repairs, the house at Clapton was left in charge of the gardener who had served under his father, and to this man our hero seems to have been somewhat partial. It is said that whenever he visited the house, which was about every other day, he would so time his arrival that he should reach the garden wall just as a certain baker's cart was going past. He would then buy a loaf, and slyly throw it over the wall, so that it should roll among and be hid by the vegetables. He would then enter the garden, and shout to the gar-

dener, "Harry, look among the cabbages; you will find something for your family."

When the repairs to the mansion were completed, our hero let it to a tenant, and then set out to see the world. He travelled in quiet respectability through France and Italy, a pastime for which the interest of the money left by his father provided ample means. During his travels he cultivated a taste for the fine arts, visiting most of the famous picture galleries, and purchasing many paintings.

On his return to England, his health being delicate, he was recommended to try the effect of a residence at Stoke Newington. He accordingly took lodgings there with a respectable family, but thinking himself not sufficiently attended to, he afterwards removed to the house of a widow—Mrs. Sarah Loidore—in the same town. His life here was that of a well-to-do Christian gentleman. The strict ideas he had imbibed in his youth prevented his participating in the gay pursuits of fashionable life, while his natural inclinations kept him equally secure from baser pleasures. He spent his time chiefly in studying the simpler branches of philosophy and medicine. He also joined the Independent Church of the town, where he became a regular attendant.

As he was thought by his doctors to be inclined to be consumptive, they recommended frequent changes of air, and he accordingly took several trips to Bristol Hot Wells, and other health resorts, with a view to warding off the threatened disease. At last, however, after travelling from place to place to no advantage, he was attacked with a very severe illness while at his lodgings at Stoke Newington; and so attentive was Mrs. Loidore to all his wants, and so tenderly did she nurse him, that on his recovery he offered her his hand in marriage. This act of gratitude was all the more remarkable from the consideration that she was not endowed by any great personal attractions, she had but small means, was a confirmed invalid, and was quite.

old enough to be his mother—she being fifty-two and he twenty-five. The lady was fully impressed with the unsuitability of the match, but our hero would take no denial; he still pressed his suit, and in the year 1752 they were married.

The lady only survived the union three years, but it seems to have proved a mutually happy one. Her death, in 1755, so affected her husband that he resolved on another visit to the Continent, in order to dispel from his mind the gloom that event had caused.

Nine days before his wife's death what is now known as the great earthquake of Lisbon had shaken the stately palaces of that proud city to their foundations, engulfing at the same time thousands of the unfortunate inhabitants. Our hero therefore determined to visit the smoking ruins of the gay city, and accordingly set out in a Lisbon packet. Instead, however, of reaching Portugal, the ship was captured by the French, and taken to Brest, where all the passengers were made prisoners of war, and treated with gross cruelty and neglect. For nine weeks they were kept prisoners, though removed first to one town and then to another. At the end of that time, our hero having impressed his gaolers with a belief in his integrity, he was allowed to return to England on giving his word of honour that he would procure the release of a French naval officer in exchange for himself, or failing that, he would return and again be their prisoner. Happily for him, the English Government readily exchanged a French officer for him, and he, having secured his own liberty, at once turned his attention to the sufferings of his fellow prisoners. With such success did he plead their cause that he had the pleasure to learn they were immediately shipped back to England.

He now settled down on his estate at Cardington, which he began to improve by sundry additions and alterations. He also took a lively interest in the affairs

of his tenants, doing all he could to encourage thrift, sobriety, and decency among them.

In the year 1758 he again married, and this time his partner seems to have been exactly suited to him in age, rank, education, and disposition. The next seven years of his life he always described as the happiest he ever knew. His time was devoted to the beautifying of his residence and the laying out of new gardens, while his leisure and that of his wife, for she heartily sympathized with all his beneficent projects, was occupied in attempts to improve the condition of his cottagers, and in relieving their misfortunes.

On the 31st of March, 1765, this devoted wife died, leaving to her sorrow-stricken husband the care of her infant son. The death of his former wife had been a shock to him, but the loss of his second seemed to overwhelm him with gloom and sadness. He became restless and unable to feel any interest in his former pursuits, and so, leaving his child in trustworthy care, he set out for a month's trip to Holland. When back again at home he tried to find relief in the monotonous round of his duties as a landowner, and in the innocent gambols and winsome ways of his child, of whom he was very fond. But he was still unable to settle down permanently amid surroundings which every moment reminded him of his loss, and so, as soon as his son was old enough for him to make arrangements for his education, he sent him to a good school, and again tried to relieve his troubled mind by the excitement of travel. He made a long tour through France and Italy, expending nearly a year in visiting the towns, and seeing the many strange sights of those celebrated countries.

On his return he took up his abode at Cardington, and entered more heartily than ever into projects for improving the condition of his tenants. He built new and healthful cottages, organized a school, and established a weekly preaching service.

Up to this time our "dunce" had achieved nothing likely to make his name illustrious excepting among his neighbours and tenantry. He was certainly a good man and a generous landlord, but he had done nothing remarkable, unless it was in marrying a poor plain widow, old enough to be his mother. And yet before his death, seventeen years later, the name of John Howard was known and honoured, not only in his own country, but all over Europe.

• In the year 1773 our hero was appointed High Sheriff of the county of Bedford, an honour rarely bestowed on a Dissenter. It was then the custom for High Sheriffs to receive their appointments merely for the honour of the title, and to pay a deputy to perform all the routine and drudgery of the office. This John Howard, as a man of integrity, could not do; and so he at once began to qualify himself for his responsible duties. As the nominal keeper of the county gaol he made a minute inspection of its condition, and a careful study of its regulations. To his utter amazement he found that all who had the misfortune to be thrown into prison were required to pay certain fees to the gaoler, no matter whether they were ultimately proved innocent or guilty; and thus they were not released until the fees were paid. He also found that the health and morals of the prisoners were utterly neglected, and that the prison, morally and physically, was a loathsome den of infection.

To remedy the first of these evils Howard applied to the county magistrates for a salary for the gaoler, so that the iniquitous system of fees might be dispensed with. They doubted their power to grant this, but promised to do so if our hero could find any other gaol where the keeper was paid in that way. Accordingly Howard rode into the neighbouring counties, but instead of finding what he sought he discovered that their own gaol at Bedford was wholesome and decent in comparison with



some of the dungeons in which prisoners were left to die of ague or fever. The sights of misery and cruelty reached this sympathetic man's heart. The rascally extortions everywhere practised touched his honour as an Englishman. He had found his mission. From that time forth John Howard was the apostle of prison reform. His benevolence was no longer confined to his estate at Carlington, nor to the county of Bedford. Like another great reformer, he might have said, "The world is my parish," for he now set out systematically to discover and reform the wrongs and miseries of prison life wherever they might be.

In one year he visited most of the English gaols, and in 1777, after four years devoted to inquiry upon the subject, he published a large volume on "The State of Prisons in England and Wales." This produced quite a sensation in the country, and roused the national conscience. Parliament took up the matter; Howard was examined before a committee of the House of Commons, and the result was the establishment of well-managed houses of correction in various parts of the kingdom.

During the eleven years from 1778 to his death, Howard made seven journeys on the Continent to inspect prisons, hospitals, and infirmaries, and paid not less than six visits to Ireland for the same purpose, besides innumerable inspections of our own gaols. Besides this incessant travelling, he kept up an extensive correspondence with the various governing bodies of Europe, made plans of every improvement he met with in prison buildings, and designed alterations in nearly every gaol in this country.

In 1789 he set out for Russia with the aim, among other objects, of obtaining information with respect to the Great Plague which was then ravaging Eastern Europe, and for which he hoped he might be permitted to discover a remedy. Instead, however, of accomplishing

this noble purpose, he fell a victim to the epidemic, and died on the 21st of January, 1790, at Cherson in the Crimea, where, in accordance with his wish, he was laid to rest.

Three years before his death a movement was set on foot in London to erect some memorial of the great philanthropist; but such was his modesty, and so little cared he for popular applause, that he at once refused his consent to the project. After his death, however, there was no longer any reason to delay the erection of a fitting monument to so illustrious a man, and accordingly a statue by Bacon was set up in St. Paul's Cathedral, with a long inscription recording his many virtues and the great work he achieved.





## VIII.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A POET.

**A**MONG the many schools which offer the blessings of a free education to the poor of Bristol, and of which that city has every reason to be proud, there was in the year 1757 one situated in Pyle Street, of which the master at that time bore the very prepossessing name of Love.

Well, in the year mentioned there was one morning brought to this school a little urchin of five years old. He was the son of a widow who, though very poor, valued the benefits of education, and was glad to avail herself of the opportunity of getting for her son Thomas at the free school that training which otherwise she would have been unable to obtain for him. Her husband had been dead rather more than five years, he having died about three months before his son's birth. Up to the time of his death he had been master of this very school, and this circumstance doubtless influenced the widow to send her little son there.

Her satisfaction at having placed Thomas where he would receive a good elementary education was, however, only of short duration. Perhaps the schoolmaster, notwithstanding his name, was not very loving or gentle in disposition. Perhaps he had too many scholars to allow of his giving special attention to one who did not get on so

well as the rest. Or perhaps he agreed with Shakespeare's constable, that "reading and writing come by nature," and accordingly expected little Tommy, as the son of a school-master, to inherit some of his father's learning. At any rate, whatever was the reason, after a few days' trial he sent little Tom back to his mother, declaring him a dull boy, hopelessly stupid, and quite incapable of improvement.

This was, of course, a great grief to his mother, and deeply did she lament her son's backwardness. The poor woman, though by no means well-to-do even in her husband's days, had always held her head up as the wife of an educated man, and since his death she had doubtless often pictured her son's future, when he should become a learned man and take some position of respectability and honour.

But now all these day-dreams were rudely dispelled, Thomas, who was to make such a grand figure in the city, was returned home as utterly incapable of learning even the alphabet. What was the poor widow to do with him? Alas! he must take his chance like the children of the poorest labourers. Since he cannot learn he must when old enough get his living by the sweat of his brow—by mere muscle and sinew. And this, too, in an age when labourers were little better than serfs—when they were hardly worked, miserably lodged, and scantily fed.

To Thomas, however, the sentence of the schoolmaster brought none of these forebodings. Perhaps he was rather pleased than otherwise at being sent home. He was somewhat wilful and stubborn, and from the first had not much liked the strict discipline and stern authority of the schoolmaster. He very much preferred playing about the house at his own sweet will to sitting on a bench at school afraid to move or speak; and certainly a chat with his mother or a romp with his sister was far more desirable than the stupid lessons.

One day Thomas was playing in the house as usual when his mother noticed that he had all at once become

remarkably quiet. Judging from former experiences that his sudden silence was but a sign of his being in mischief, she went to look after him, when, to her surprise, she found him staring with widely opened eyes at a fragment of paper he had rummaged from some old drawer or cupboard. His deceased father had been a musician—indeed he was one of the paid chanters at Bristol Cathedral—and the scrap of paper which had so interested our dunce was part of a musical manuscript in French. The writer had taken great pains with his work, and the capital letters were illuminated in gilt and colours, after the fashion of monkish psalters. It was these capital letters, gay with flourishes and bright with colour and gilding, which had proved such a powerful attraction to our hero.

The widow, always having in view her son's education, at once conceived the happy idea of teaching him the alphabet by means of these illuminated capitals. It was a tedious task, for besides his dulness he seems to have disliked the lesson. She was obliged to make it appear in the light of an amusement rather than a task. At length, however, her labours were rewarded—our dunce mastered the formidable alphabet. From the gay capitals of the French song she coaxed him to the study of a Testament printed in black letter or old English, and at last he was able to read it with tolerable ease.

His mother does not seem to have made another attempt to get our dunce admitted to the Pyle Street school. She was his only teacher till he was nearly eight, when she got him admitted into Colston's Charity School in Bristol. This was a piece of great good fortune for the fatherless lad, since the pupils at this school not only received a thorough plain education, but were also fed, clothed, and lodged perfectly free. But while the advantages were great, the discipline was very strict and the rules almost severe. The boys were expected in summer to study from seven to twelve o'clock in the morning, and from one to

five in the afternoon; and in the winter from eight to twelve, mornings, and from one to four, afternoons; and all had to be in bed, summer or winter, by eight o'clock every night.

Thomas's career at school seems to have been almost unmarked by incidents worthy of record. Though he had, with his mother's help, got over his first difficulties in the path of learning, his further progress was by no means rapid. He was neither remarkable for ability in the class, distinguished for daring in the playground, nor notorious for rebellion against rules. Yet even thus early in life he gave evidence of great ambition. A potter, who was a friend of the family, promised him a present of china ware, and asked him what design he would like painted on it. "Paint me," said the aspiring lad, "an angel with wings and a trumpet to trumpet my name about the world."

After two years of slow but steady progress, our dunce had so far advanced as to take a pleasure in his studies. He was a dunce no longer. His old dislike for books gave way to a keen relish for them, and instead of spending in sweets or toys the trifling sum his mother managed to allow him, he gladly devoted it to the hiring of books from the circulating libraries. Books now became his friends, his companions, and his pastime. He had never made much figure in the playground before, but now he was rarely seen there. In the play-hour he would slip away to some quiet corner where he could peruse his cherished volumes without interruption. His favourite works were those dealing with history and divinity. Strange books—the latter at any rate—for a boy of ten to choose. At the age of twelve he had occupied his leisure to such purpose that he wrote out a list of books he had read to the number of seventy.

He appears to have held himself aloof from his school-fellows, as if he considered their aims and aspirations beneath his notice. He was proud and exceedingly im-

perious. It is said he very seldom joined in school sports, but occasionally he would mount the church steps and repeat poetry to those whom he preferred among his classmates.

One of the teachers at Colston School—a young man of the name of Phillips—was something of a poet, and his example fired the elder boys to try their skill in verse. Three or four of the lads were so successful that their poems were accepted and published in newspapers and periodicals. For a long time this poetic rivalry seems to have gone on without exciting our friend Thomas to emulation, but at last he too caught the poetic fever, though his shyness and reserve kept him for a long time from showing his productions.

At fourteen he was constantly rhyming, and his subjects were as various as they were numerous. He penned paraphrases on Scripture, wrote "Lines on the Last Day," and ridiculed in rhyme the master and any of the boys who displeased him. But these miscellaneous poems were kept a secret between Thomas and his sister until a short time before he left school, when several were shown to Phillips, who, however, did not see anything remarkable in them.

On the 1st of July, 1767, Thomas left school, and was apprenticed for seven years to Mr. John Lambert, an attorney in the city. His mother's means being so limited, his apprenticeship fee was only ten pounds, but to balance that this proud lad had to put up with the humiliation of sleeping with the foot-boy, and was required to be in his master's office from eight o'clock in the morning until the same hour at night, with the exception of the time allowed for dinner. This was rather close confinement for our young poet, but he appears to have reconciled himself tolerably well to his fate, and to have given satisfaction to his master. Mr. Lambert seems to have been rather a rough, blunt man, who could only sneer at the scraps of poetry he found lying about his apprentice's desk; but he

never had occasion to correct Thomas but once, and then he gave him one or two thumps for having sent an abusive letter to his schoolmaster, who had somehow incurred his dislike.

In October, 1768, the new bridge at Bristol was opened, and there appeared in "Felix Farley's Journal" what was represented as a copy of an ancient manuscript describing the Friars first passing over the old bridge. This quaint paragraph excited great interest in the city, and there was much curiosity to see the original and to learn who possessed it. People went to the office of the "Journal," but could learn nothing of it. There sure enough was a manuscript which had very mysteriously found its way into the office, but who had brought it or who had copied it was more than the editor knew. At last a clue was obtained. The handwriting was discovered to be that of Thomas Chatterton, Mr. Lambert's apprentice, and so several gentlemen went at once to the lawyer's office and demanded of the lad a sight of the original document. Thomas was somewhat alarmed at the eager manner of his questioners, and at first refused to answer them; but at last, after a number of prevarications, he said he had found the parchment at home, where it had been brought by his father from an old chest in an upper room in Redcliffe Church.

This event brought Chatterton to the notice of two gentlemen who took a great interest in all matters relating to the early history of the city, and to them he gave a poem called "The Bristowe Tragedy"—Bristowe being the ancient name for Bristol—and the "Epitaph on Robert Canynge," as well as other short pieces, representing them as copies of old parchments he had found about the house. In return for these poems he received small sums of money, the loan of books, and from one of the gentlemen a few lessons in surgery.

There is, however, every reason to believe that the plausible story told by the lawyer's apprentice as to the



origin of these poems and papers was false, and that they were really his own composition. •

About twenty years previously Chatterton's father had begged from his uncle, who was then sexton of the Church of St. Mary Redcliffe, a quantity of old parchments which had for many years been lying in a damaged chest in a room over the vestry. Most of these parchments the schoolmaster used to cover Bibles and copy-books, while some were used by his wife for "making dolls, thread-papers, and the like." Thomas, happening one day to catch sight of one of these fragments, at once began to peruse it. His study of the black letter Testament had given him a taste for antique manuscripts, and, learning from his mother that there might be more in the house, he at once hunted up every fragment of parchment he could find. It was from these scraps he professed to copy the "Poems by Rowley," which he offered to the public. Possibly, in one or two cases, the old documents did contain poetry, but notwithstanding his repeated assertions, it seems very unlikely that a tithe of what he produced were thus found.

This subject has provoked much controversy, but the following seems the most probable solution of the difficulty:—

Thomas Chatterton was conscious of poetic ability of no mean order, but the notice taken of his poems by his teacher Phillips proved to him what hard, uphill work it would be to achieve success if he offered them to the public as the productions of a boy of sixteen. The fact of the possession of fragments of ancient parchments, and the marvellous skill he had acquired in the imitation of the writing, spelling, and even the phraseology in vogue three centuries before, seem to have suggested to him the idea of palming off his own productions as copies of ancient poems. He was not without examples for this style of forgery. Ten years before James Macpherson, of Scotland,

had published poems of his own as translations from Ossian, and in his own day the Honourable Horace Walpole had given to the public as a translation from the Italian a novel he had himself written.

Chatterton doubtless purposed, if the poems won the applause of the literary world, to claim them as his own, and thus at once achieve fame and success. But the deception did not succeed so well as he had expected. Many people questioned the authenticity of the poems, and the more they were examined the more certain it appeared that they were forgeries. But the youth had started on a career of deceit, and found it difficult to stop. Instead of acknowledging the authorship of his poetry and trusting to its real merits for popularity, he persistently avowed that he had copied it from ancient parchments. And in order to bolster up his statement it is said he wrote some of his lines in antique style on parchment, which he afterwards stained, and smoked and soiled until it looked sufficiently old to be mistaken for an ancient document.

He now began to pine for a more ambitious pursuit than that of a lawyer's clerk, and as several of his poems had been inserted in various magazines he set his mind on a literary career. Horace Walpole was then compiling his "Anecdotes of Painting," and Chatterton sent him a paper entitled "The Ryse of Peyneteyne in Englande, wroten by T. Rowlie, 1469, for Mastro Canynge." Walpole had some doubts about the genuineness of the document, but asked for more of those ancient papers. These were at once sent, together with a request that Walpole would use his influence to procure for the sender a more congenial employment than that he then held. To this Walpole replied that he could not help him in the matter, and further stated that he could not accept the documents as genuine. Our poet now wrote a curt letter, reasserting their authenticity and asking for their return

but as Walpole happened to be on the Continent when it arrived, no reply came. In a few days he again wrote what Walpole thought an impertinent and insulting demand for the return of the manuscripts. They were accordingly returned in an envelope without any remark.

Thus was closed the channel through which Chatterton had fondly imagined he should procure release from his drudgery and humiliations, and entrance to a literary career. He accordingly became moody and despondent. There was a trace of insanity in the family, and the pent-up fire of his genius, together with the melancholy of blighted hopes, seem to have caused the development of the latent disorder. One Saturday a paper was found upon his desk entitled "The Last Will and Testament of Thomas Chatterton," from which it was evident that he intended committing suicide on the morrow—Easter Sunday. He was of course prevented from carrying out his ignoble purpose, but the discovery of such a design so frightened Mrs. Lambert that she declined to keep him any longer on the premises. And so, to Chatterton's great relief, his indentures were cancelled before he was eighteen.

He was now his own master, and able to follow the leadings of ambition. He had received promises of literary employment from two or three publishers in London, and so, with a few hoarded pounds in his pocket, the lately despairing but now hopeful youth marched away to the great metropolis, there to achieve fame for himself, and wealth and independence for his mother and sister left behind in Bristol. His reception in London was very flattering to one so young. He at once found employment as a contributor to magazines, though the remuneration was but small. He, however, contrived to pinch a trifle out of his scanty income with which to send a few presents to the loved ones at home, to whom he wrote the most glowing description of his success and glorious prophecies of his future fame and wealth. He was presented to the

Lord Mayor and to many other distinguished persons, and seems to have gained at once an entrance into the many literary circles.

But, alas! this sudden popularity as suddenly collapsed. And without anything satisfactorily to account for it, the bare fact is recorded that in a few weeks the proud, impatient poet was engaged in that most desperate struggle with fortune—writing for bread. Anxiety and insufficient food reacted on his mental powers, and as day by day he was compelled to take less food, so day by day he felt the ability to earn more decreasing. He could not hide his sufferings from his acquaintances, but his pride hindered him from accepting the help they offered. Even his landlady offered him a sixpence out of his rent, but the haughty youth refused it, saying, as he touched his forehead, "I have that here which will get me more." With all his labour, however, he could not now keep out of debt. His poverty was such that he was obliged to buy his bread stale in order that it might last the longer, and one whole week he ate nothing but a single loaf. From his despairing looks and strange manners, it was soon apparent that his brain was giving way. At last the climax was reached. The baker's wife refused to let him have another loaf unless he paid his bill, and so the desperate young man shut himself up in his room, tore up and burnt most of his papers, and then swallowed a dose of arsenic.

Thus died, by his own act, at a little under eighteen years of age, the wilful, clever, ambitious Thomas Chatterton, who, had he lived to man's estate, would doubtless have taken his place in the very foremost rank of English poets. Dr. Johnson mentions him as "the most extraordinary young man that had ever encountered his knowledge; and Warton gave it as his opinion that he "would have proved the first of English poets if he had reached a maturer age." As it was he

left behind him three volumes of poems which exhibit amazing powers of versification and remarkable poetic fervour. And yet Chatterton at five years old was sent back from an elementary school as a dull boy and incapable of improvement.





## IX.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT PREACHER.

**I**F we could have gone about ninety years ago to the parish school of Anstruther, a small seaport in Fife, and had asked the romping youngsters in the playground who was the favourite amongst them, they would doubtless have pointed to Tam —, a lad of nine or ten years of age, and unanimously pronounced him the “brawest, bonniest laddie i’ the school.” And certainly, with his firm, well-knit frame, his roguish face, and his brave, honest eyes, the lad looked just the one to be a leader among his school-fellows. But if we had proceeded to get the master’s sanction to this verdict, the sour-visaged, almost blind dominie would probably have answered peevishly, “Ah, weel, Tam’s gleg eneugh an’ guid eneugh when he will, but the callan’s oure fu’ o’ mischief, an’ unco idle.”

This lad, the pride of his playmates and the plague of his pedagogue, was the sixth child in a family of fourteen. His father was a general merchant in the town, and both he and his wife seem to have been deeply religious, and to have bestowed every possible care on the training of their children. With such a large and growing family, however, it was impossible that the mother could herself attend to all her children,

and so, as soon as Tam 'was two years old, he was handed over to the tender mercies of a hired nurse. This nurse, however, took greater care of herself than she did of the child. She uniformly neglected and ill-used him, and, in order to hide her misconduct from her mistress, resorted to all kinds of petty falsehoods and deccits. The nurse's cruelty roused in young Tam such disgust and fear, that the young urchin showed a wonderfully early desire to go to school, where he was accordingly sent at an unusually early age.

Tam was rather an odd little fellow, and had what are called "old-fashioned" ways and sayings. He had quite early in life announced his determination of becoming a preacher, as several of his ancestors had been before him, and to this determination he held with unusual constancy. When only three years of age, he was one night found marching up and down the nursery floor, all alone in the dark, repeating certain passages of Scripture which had caught his attention at odd times and fixed themselves upon his memory. His ambition to be a clergyman grew with his growth, and the would-be parson seems to have been very impatient to begin his professional duties. He did not wait for a call from the Church, or indeed a call from any one. Having chosen his first text, the child-orator mounted one of the parlour chairs, and preached away quite earnestly to a congregation consisting of only one listener—a younger brother—who sat on a hassock very attentively at his feet.

But Tam's diligence was not equal to his ambition. While he was choosing texts and preaching sermons at home, he was making very little progress in his lessons at school. If his father expected him to be a quick scholar because he had so early shown a liking for school, he must have been very much disappointed. His early eagerness to go to school was prompted by a wish to escape the tyranny of his nurse rather than by any love of learning

He was still as fond as ever of school, but it was on account of its sports and companionships. He was noted as one of the strongest, merriest, and idlest of the boys. He was the ringleader in many of the sports, his voice was sure to be heard above the fray of tongues in the playground, and he joined with the foremost in mischievous pranks. But when the time for lessons came, Tam was glad to fall into the rear ranks, for he was generally only half prepared to say them. For this neglect he sometimes felt the invigorating effect of the cross old dominie's cane; but the most common punishment was to lock him up in the school-master's coal-hole until he had mastered the faulty lesson. And yet he was quick enough when he cared to try to learn his lessons; and, as a rule, a very short stay in the "black hole" was sufficient to enable him to accomplish the appointed task.

Having by slow degrees learned enough to enable him to read, Tam at once employed himself in reading over and over again that wonderful book for children, "The Pilgrim's Progress." With this single exception, he does not appear to have had any fondness for books or any great desire for knowledge. One day an uncle who was very fond of mathematics took Tam in hand, hoping to inspire the young rogue with an equal love for the science; but after several vain attempts to get the lad to give the right definition of a point made on a slate, he gave up in despair, and never again troubled his nephew with mathematics.

But even had our hero been as industrious as he was idle, it is very doubtful whether he would have made much progress at the parish school. The master was about as unfitted for the post as any man could possibly be. Perhaps at one time he had been a moderately efficient teacher, but at the time our dunce was under his rule he was too blind to read or write, too forgetful to teach, and too old to perform any part of the teacher's office except the flogging.



This he did with a vengeance. He might have sat for the portrait sketched in the old school rhyme—

“Old John Cross kept the village day-school,  
And a queer old man was he;  
For he spared not the rod, but kept the old rule  
As he beat in the A B C.”

It seemed as if the infirm old pedagogue was anxious to do something for his money, and since he was past teaching he had resolved to give a double measure of thrashing to make out for it. The ruler was far oftener in request for making lines on the unfortunate youngsters' hands than for ruling their copy-books. And since, in consequence of the master's blindness, the culprits sometimes dodged him, and for the moment escaped punishment, he would slyly bide his time, and when they were thrown off their guard he would contrive to get them within his reach, and then settle with them for any arrears of punishment due, together with abundant interest.

It was impossible that such a master and such a system could inspire the scholars with any love of learning, or incite them to vigorous effort. The violent tyranny and petty deceptions of the schoolmaster, while they must have roused the disgust and contempt of his pupils, were still somewhat calculated to lead them to practise the same. And if Tam, with his strength and his acknowledged influence in the playground, had turned out an overbearing bully and a cowardly sneak, we should only have said it was just what might have been expected.

Happily our hero was proof against these dangerous influences. Partly because of a natural nobleness of disposition, partly because of his high ambition, but chiefly because of the healthy moral and religious influences of home, young Tam was left uncontaminated. Dunce he was, and an able, roguish dunce; but he was no liar, no bully. He would never stand by and see smaller boys put upon. Indeed, he was the defender of all the small fry of

the school, and was constantly interfering on behalf of some luckless little urchin. Yet he never cared to decide these matters by an appeal to "fist law." He had a great dislike for fights or quarrels, and if there seemed any danger of a dispute ending so, he always did his best to settle the difference in a friendly way. If, however, the lads would not listen to him, but began to pelt each other with stones, he would leave them to it, and run to a safe shelter, saying, "I'm no' for powder and ball." He never made use of improper language, and perfectly detested lying; and such was his moral courage that he never failed to reprove any boys who offended in either way while in his company.

Indeed, if Tam had only been quiet, self-contained, and ordinarily studious, he would have been the very counterpart of those perfect specimens of schoolboy humanity one meets with only in story-books, and who generally win the highest marks in every subject, and lose none by bad conduct. But however admirable in other respects, Tam was a dunce; and by the time he was twelve years of age his father seems to have become aware of the fact, for he was then sent to try the effect of a course of study at the University of St. Andrews. As a proof of the slight progress he had made at school, a letter of his, written to his mother after his first session at college, is still to be seen, in which the errors of grammar and spelling are both numerous and glaring.

So little prepared was he for the college studies, that he was positively unable at first to join in the exercises of the other students. This, however, does not appear to have disturbed him very much, for we are told he did little else in the first two sessions besides play at golf and football, the favourite games of the place. But golf and football, though they might develop the muscle and strengthen the lungs, were not sufficient alone to qualify our hero for the ministerial career he had chosen; and since he had

been sent to college expressly for the purpose of being educated for the Church, our dunce's good sense and right feeling at last caused him to settle down steadily to work.

And, strange to say, the first study to engross his attention was the very one his uncle had despaired of his ever learning. His love for mathematics became intense—so ardent, indeed, that, having mastered all the English books within his reach, he learned French for the mere sake of studying the works in that language on the higher branches of the science. As in duty bound, he attended the divinity classes, and listened to the theological lectures of the most eminent professors; but they failed to excite more than common interest in the subject. To study theology was his duty, and with his natural conscientiousness he studied it. But mathematics was his passion and delight, and he bounded to it from his other studies, as he had done to his play when a schoolboy at Anstruther.

Thus it seemed at first that the would-be parson was going to turn out a mathematician. A change, however, at length came over him. About the middle of his fifteenth year he happened to read "Edwards on the Freedom of the Will," a book which thoroughly fascinated him by opening up a new and wonderfully attractive field of thought. For some days he could not think or talk of anything else. The book proved to be the turning-point in his course of study. Though he always retained a liking for mathematical pursuits, they were no longer his chief concern. Thoughts of a totally different order now crowded on his mind, and he at once commenced to fit himself for the duties and responsibilities of the position to which he aspired.

He began a thorough study of the English language, and carefully practised himself in composition. In two years he had so far progressed that he was able to speak or write both fluently and vigorously. He attended several debating classes connected with the University, and thus

acquired great freedom in extempore speaking. He soon attracted notice among his fellow-students, and the force, elegance, and fervour of his orations were subjects of frequent comment. The eloquence and earnestness of his prayers were especially remarked by all who heard him. The public were allowed to be present at the prayers held in the University Hall morning and evening, but as a rule few persons attended. When, however, it was known beforehand that our hero was to officiate, the people came in crowds to hear the fervid eloquence of this youth of sixteen.

After spending seven years at the University, our hero obtained a situation as tutor in a gentleman's family. An amusing anecdote is told of the way in which he started for his new home. He was quite ready, and the horse that was to bear him thither stood saddled at the door. Tam had taken a very affectionate leave of all his family, and was doubtless rather misty about his eyes. At any rate, on coming out of the house, followed by father and mother and a "baker's dozen" of brothers and sisters, Tam walked up to his horse, and by some mistake mounted him on the wrong side. Of course, when he attempted to grasp the reins, he caught hold of the crupper strap, and at once discovered that he was sitting with his face to the horse's tail. This was altogether too ridiculous to escape laughter, so between laughing and crying Tam scrambled into the right position, and trotted off before the spectators had time to recover from the merriment his absurd blunder had caused.

On arriving at his new quarters Tam found them anything but comfortable; and after a few months' trial he gave up the situation, and shortly afterwards returned to St. Andrews. Here he applied to the Presbytery for the usual examination prior to being accepted as a preacher. He was now barely nineteen, and the sage old ministers shook their heads gravely at the idea of one so young

aspiring to "handle the Word." They suggested that on account of his youth he should defer the matter for a year or two. It had, however, been discovered by his friends that, in case of an applicant possessing unusual ability, the mere fact of youthfulness need not disqualify him. And so, notwithstanding much hesitancy and little argument, the point was carried, and after due examination our friend Tam was licensed to preach, and thus became the Rev. Thomas Chalmers.

He started at once southwards on foot and preached his first sermon in public at Wigan. He next spent two years of diligent study at the University of Edinburgh, and after preaching for some time at a place called Cavers, he was, in May, 1803, ordained minister of Kilmany. Here he laboured patiently and arduously for eleven years, when the publication of several of his sermons attracted the attention of the public, and he was invited to become the minister of the Tron Church at Glasgow.

Here his eloquence and fervour attracted such crowds to every service, that it was quite impossible for a late-comer to get admission. His oratory exerted the same power on all who came within its reach. The wealthy and the poor, the educated and the ignorant, all ranks and classes crowded to hear him. Broadcloth and fustian, silks and cottons, velvets and rags jostled each other at the church doors. He became the greatest "lion" of the city. The same invisible attraction accompanied him when he visited the metropolis and preached in several of its principal churches. The religious world of London was moved to enthusiasm, and not only the middle classes, but the nobility and the members of the Government, flocked to hear the great Scotch divine.

In the year 1817 Chalmers preached a series of sermons on "The Connection between Astronomy and Christianity," which were amazingly popular. To gratify the public they were printed, and so great was the demand for them that

in a single year no less than nine editions had been called for.

Our hero was now engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with the overwhelming sin and misery and poverty of a great city. He had his own ideas and plans for the moral and social reform of the masses, and these he set in operation in a new parish which had been formed at his suggestion. He had under his care ten thousand parishioners, most of them belonging to the labouring or destitute classes. The continual responsibility of superintending all the religious and social organizations of this large parish was too great a strain on his health, but notwithstanding the fact that seven academic chairs were offered him in different universities, he steadily worked on for ten long years. He then sought the rest he could no longer dispense with by accepting the Professorship of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews. Four years later he became Professor of Theology at the University of Edinburgh.

In the year 1840 was terminated a struggle which had long been going on in the Church of Scotland between liberty and patronage. The ultimate result was that 470 ministers gave up their livings and formed themselves into the Free Church of Scotland. The foremost man in the war for liberty, and the elected head of the first General Assembly of the new body, was our hero, Dr. Thomas Chalmers, the degree of LL.D. having been conferred on him by the University of Oxford.

He was still actively engaged in work on behalf of his beloved community, when, on the morning of the 31st of May, 1847, without any previous illness, he was found dead in his bed, at the age of sixty-seven.

As a pulpit orator, Chalmers was remarkable for thrilling narratives, apt illustrations, and earnest appeals. His power over an audience has been described as mesmeric so easily could he move them to smiles or tears. On all questions of religious or social interest he wielded more

influence than any man Scotland has produced since the Reformation. And as an author he has left us twenty-five volumes of theological and religious treatises. Such was the man who, when a boy, was almost daily banished to the schoolmaster's coal-hole as a dunce.





## X.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT WRITER.

**I**N the 10th of November, 1728, a baby was born at the parsonage of an out-of-the-way village called Pallas, in Longford County, Ireland. The parson had already as large a family as he knew how to provide for. His parishioners were so poor that, though he tried to mend matters by cultivating a small farm, and also by performing extra duty in other parishes, all the poor man could scrape together was about forty pounds a year. If the little boy had been a specially handsome child, it is likely he might have been more thankfully received. Instead of that, however, it is said he was "very ordinary-looking," and, as every one knows, that means extraordinarily bad-looking. And so the poor clergyman and his wife received the child as a dispensation to be resigned to, rather than as a blessing to be thankful for.

This lad so inauspiciously ushered into the world, and who in due time was christened Oliver, proved to be a very Irishman of Irishmen, exemplifying in his life and character all the virtues, failings, and peculiarities for which natives of the Emerald Isle have become proverbial.

Before the boy was two years old, his father's circumstances were considerably improved by the death of a



relation, in consequence of which the parson succeeded to a better living, at an income of about two hundred a year, at Lissoy, in the county of Westmeath.

The first teacher young Oliver had was a young woman named Elizabeth Delap, who had lived at the parsonage, and afterwards became mistress of the village school. She it was who taught the young rogue the letters of the alphabet, and, if her memory was reliable, it was no light task to do it, for she speaks of him as a great dunce. When asked about him in after-life, she said, "There never was so dull a boy. He seemed impenetrably stupid."

At the age of six Oliver was sent to the village school to see what the master, Mr. Thomas Byrne, a rather eccentric character, could make of him. Here he seems to have had a pretty comfortable time of it, though so far as progress in study was concerned, he might almost as well have been running errands for his mother or bird-scaring in his father's fields. Mr. Byrne was an old soldier who had seen much service under the Duke of Marlborough, and he often glorified himself and entertained his pupils by thrilling and circumstantial narratives of his adventures and campaigns. Indeed, he seems to have sadly neglected his duties as a teacher, in order to indulge his taste as a teller of stories. He was a devout believer in all the superstitions of the country-side, and could talk by the hour of witchcraft and warnings, ghosts and fairies. He knew more old ballads and romantic adventures than any one for miles round, and when his day's duties were over he often repaired to the village alchouse to entertain the guests, alternately amusing and amazing the country bumpkins there assembled by his tales of mirth and mystery.

No doubt such a teacher was very much liked by his scholars. It was far easier to listen to tales and ballads than to learn history or spelling. At least we may be

sure he found one appreciative listener in our dunce, for his tastes through life were to a certain extent coloured by the tales he heard from his old pensioner schoolmaster.

But perhaps a still greater influence was exerted on his after-life by a misfortune which at this time befel him. As has been said, he was from the first anything but a pretty child, but in his eighth year his plainness was turned into positive ugliness by an attack of smallpox. At first it seemed as if the disease would carry off its victim, but, though defeated in that, it left the poor little fellow's face so seamed and scarred that he became the scorn and joke of all the ill-feeling lads he met. The consciousness of his ugliness increased his already extreme sensibility, and the shy, awkward, ugly boy became a perfect misery to himself.

As if this affliction were not enough misfortune in itself, it was decided, on our hero's recovery, that he should be sent to a public school at Elphin, instead of returning to his old teacher, Mr. Byrne, of whose shortcomings Oliver's father was doubtless aware.

It would have been quite a sufficient trial for our dunce to have faced the smiles and jests of the boys he knew so well at the parish school, but he would certainly have found some old friends to stand by him, or, at the worst, he could have borne the persecution with some degree of resignation; but to be launched among a whole host of perfect strangers, and those strangers the boys of a public school, perhaps the most thoughtless, tormenting, and lawless specimens of juvenile humanity—this was, indeed, a bitter experience.

He at once became the butt of all the sneers and practical jokes of his schoolfellows, and because the timid lad quietly pocketed all affronts, and eagerly forgave any persecutor who made a show of offering him friendship, "they all considered him a stupid, heavy blockhead, little better than a fool."

And yet sometimes, in the midst of the storm of sneers and cuffs, little Oliver would flash out with a reply sharp and ready enough to astonish his tormentors. To enable him to attend the public school, he had gone to reside with his uncle John at Ballyoughter, but even in his uncle's house he was not free from persecution on account of his personal appearance. "Why, Noll," said a visitor one day, "you are become a perfect fright! When do you mean to get handsome?" The lad walked sadly away without a word; but when the visitor, who was well known as a disgrace to the family connection, again put the question, our dunce turned round and said, "I mean to get *better*, sir, when you do." On another occasion he was dancing a hornpipe at his uncle's, when the fiddler likened him to Æsop for his ugliness. Young Oliver overheard the sneer, and directly afterwards replied with a couple of lines, which have been preserved:—

"Our herald hath proclaimed this saying,  
See Æsop dancing, and *his monkey playing*."

After rather more than two years of persecution and misery at Elphin, our hero was removed to a superior school at Athlone. There he remained until the school was given up, when he was sent to one at Edgeworthstown kept by the Rev. Patrick Hughes. At this school he stayed four years, and the time seems to have passed not altogether unhappily or unprofitably. He was there, as everywhere else, noted for his ugliness and awkwardness, his readiness to take offence, and his greater readiness to forgive. The master, who was an old friend of his father, took kindly to the timid, shy boy, and often expressed himself as "thinking well" of him—for what reason the other boys could never understand, for they considered him rather dull. When he first entered this school his shyness kept him from mixing much in his schoolfellows' sport, but before he left, his great good nature and evident

love of frolic had made him a sort of leader in the playground, and no trick could be played without his having a hand in it.

His holidays were happy times, usually spent in the neighbourhood of Ballymahon. There he occupied his leisure with fishing, cricket, fives-ball, and playing his flute; diversified by an occasional performance at "sledge-hammer throwing" at a country fair, or an attack on the fruit of some gentleman's orchard.

On leaving school, it was decided that Oliver should go to college, although, in consequence of the slight promise of his early career, he had at first been intended for apprenticeship to some trade. This change in his prospects was caused by some verses he had privately written while at Elphin, and which, happening to come to light, convinced the family that, after all, this unpromising lad had talents worth further training.

An elder brother, Henry, had gone to Dublin College as a pensioner about six years before, and had won a scholarship. And, but for the father's imprudence and false family pride, Oliver might have entered the college on the same free footing, instead of having to go as a sizar, and submit to all sorts of indignities.

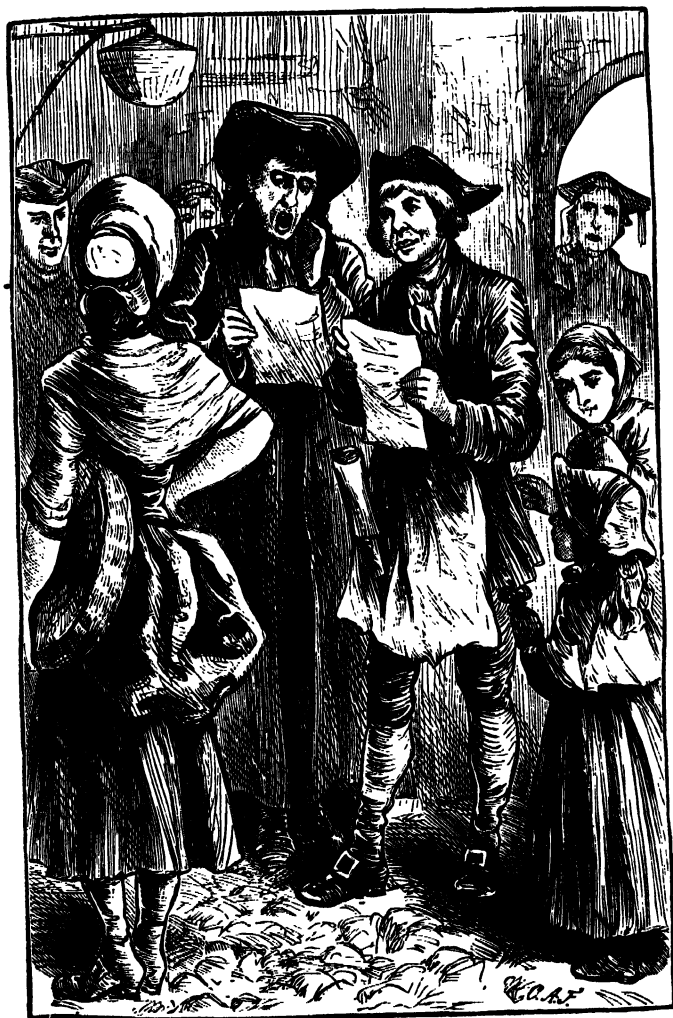
The misfortune arose in this way. Oliver's eldest sister had, to the great annoyance of her father, secretly married a young man who moved in a higher station in life. And when the father taunted the poor old parson with having decoyed the young man into a marriage beneath his rank, he was irritated beyond measure. He at once entered into an agreement to pay down £400 as his daughter's marriage portion, thereby thinking to keep up the family honour and to place her on terms of equality with her husband's friends. But what with his large and still increasing family, and his numerous charities, the old clergyman was quite unable to pay this amount without mortgaging his tithes and rents, and thus reducing his

income. So, in order to benefit his one child, he had to do an injustice to the rest.

Hence it was that, instead of entering college as a free student, our hero had to become a menial and a drudge. In return for the classical education available, he had to sweep the college courts, carry up the dinner to the students' table, and wait until they had finished. He had to wear a servant's badge, lodge in one of the garrets of the college, and, to make bad worse, had a perfect brute for his tutor.

No wonder that he made little out. He avoided the lectures when he could, and consoled himself amid his misfortunes by shutting himself up in his room, and blowing away his miseries on his flute. He is described by his fellow-students as "a low-sized, thick, robust, ungainly figure, lounging about the college courts, on the wait for misery and ill luck; and possessing a slow, hesitating, somewhat hollow voice, heard seldom, and always to great disadvantage, in the class-rooms."

When he had been at college a year and half his father died, and the small sums he had been used to receive occasionally from home were thus no longer available. From this time forth, excepting occasional gifts from a kind uncle named Contarine, he had no resources; he was always borrowing small sums from his friends, and sometimes he even had to pawn his books to pay for food. To keep from starving he used to write street-ballads, sell them to the publishers for five shillings each, and then steal out from the college at night to hear them sung. Doubtless they were bawled by men who did justice to neither words nor music; but who can tell the pleasure it afforded our young poetic dunce to listen to his own rhymes, as he hid himself in the shadow of a doorway or behind a gable? What visions of successful authorship, of a wider audience, and of future fame delighted his heart and cheered his sad spirit, none can say.



GOLDSMITH LISTENING TO HIS OWN BALLADS.



But though it was poverty that drove him to the publishers with a ballad, he did not always succeed in carrying home the price he got for it. So tender was his heart and so strong his sympathy with suffering, that the first beggar he met who was, or pretended to be, in great distress, would be sure to get the hardy-earned crown. Not unfrequently a part of his scanty clothing would also go with the money.

As has been said, our hero's tutor was a brute. He was noted for his violent temper, his great physical strength, and his fondness for mathematics. He had, on one occasion, knocked the driver of a hackney-coach right out of his seat with one blow of his great fist, because his whip had happened to touch his face. In matters of study he took no notice of personal aptitude or preference. If he had set Oliver to translate one of the Latin poets, the poor student would doubtless have done credit to himself; but he had an utter contempt for everything except mathematics, and since our dunce was a greater dunce at that than at anything else, his tutor daily insulted, ridiculed, and sneered at him.

Of course Oliver settled down under such treatment into utter carelessness and sullen defiance, until at last the tutor got from taunts to blows, and struck the poor sizar to the ground for having a merrymaking in his chambers without leave. This affront, so publicly given, stung the sensitive scholar to the quick. He felt that he could not again hold up his head at the college, so he sold his books, ran away, and set out for Cork, with a vague idea of going to America.

When his few shillings were spent, the disconsolate student went home, where his brother provided him with clothes, and at last persuaded him to return to college. There he stayed, and bore in silence a continuation of his tutor's ill-treatment, until 1749, when, at the age of twenty-one, he just managed to secure the degree of Bachelor of



**Arts.** Last on the list of the successful candidates was the name of Oliver Goldsmith.

But though, in consequence of his degree, we can call Oliver a dunce no longer, he did not at once become illustrious. After a short stay with his brother Henry, he was persuaded by his family, much against his wish, to present himself as a candidate for the ministry. The bishop, however, would not ordain him, as is supposed, because he presented himself in a pair of scarlet breeches instead of orthodox black.

Then he went as tutor in a gentleman's family, but after about a year gave up his post, and started off to Cork on a good horse, and with his salary in his pocket, intending to sail to America. But after six weeks, when every one thought he was across the Atlantic, he returned home on a miserable horse and with empty pockets.

Next it was decided he should try for the legal profession, and Uncle Contarine gave him £50 to pay his expenses to London and his studies there. But he lost it all on the road by foolishly attempting to increase it by gambling, and had to write in bitter shame to tell his uncle of his folly.

After a few weeks spent in abject poverty at home, the good old gentleman again provided his imprudent nephew with money, and Oliver started for Edinburgh to study medicine. On this occasion he did manage to reach his destination, and for eighteen months studied chemistry and medicine. But he was far more celebrated as a genial companion, a famous teller of stories, and a good singer of Irish songs, than for any professional skill or knowledge.

Tired of Edinburgh, Oliver decided to travel. He set sail accordingly for the Continent, intending to study at the University of Leyden, and narrowly escaped shipwreck, but got imprisoned at Newcastle on suspicion of being a Jacobite—luckily, as it happened, for the ship he was to sail in was wrecked.

A year's stay in Leyden was quite sufficient for this volatile young Irishman, and he decided to extend his travels. He accordingly borrowed a small sum of money from an acquaintance to enable him to do so. But the very next day he spent it nearly all in buying some choice "Dutch bulbs" to send to his Uncle Contarine, who was fond of flowers. He now set out with only a guinea in his pocket, and one shirt to his back, and travelled on foot, at his own sweet will, through France, Germany, and Italy. He supported himself on the way by playing on his flute, and begged his nightly shelter from the humble peasantry, or earned it by disputations at the various universities.

On the 1st of February, 1756, he again landed in England, a poor solitary wayfarer. His kind Uncle Contarine was dead; he had no friend to appeal to for help, and no employment could he get. No one cared to engage a ragged, travel-stained adventurer, such as our hero now was, even if he had been English, and he found how bitterly true it was in most cases that "no Irish need apply."

He begged and starved his way to London, where he was compelled to live among the beggars of Axe Lane, until a chemist took compassion on him, and allowed him to mix drugs for him. He now had the good fortune to meet with an old college friend, and got set up as a doctor in Southwark. But his patients were as poor as himself, and though he found sufficient practice, he got little pay, and had to try something else. Then he worked for a time for a printer as "corrector" to the press. He next accepted, for a short space, the drudgery of an usher in an academy.

There he met with a bookseller named Griffiths, who engaged him for a year to live in the house, and write for a review he was publishing. In Griffiths' house he was stinted in his food, grudged his paltry wages, debarred his liberty, and insulted by his employer, for both man and wife had the presumption to alter and correct his manuscript.

At last he could stand it no longer, and he went for another short spell as tutor, his leisure being meanwhile engaged in writing a pamphlet on "The Present State of Polite Learning in Europe." He again left the school, and set up on his own account as literary adventurer, living in a garret and writing for his bread. His book was published in 1759, and excited considerable interest. He now found regular, though by no means profitable, employment as a compiler of histories and translator of foreign works.

In 1761, while under arrest for debt, his friend, the great Dr. Johnson, sold a novel Goldsmith had written—"The Vicar of Wakefield"—for £60, a sum which seemed to him then a mint of money, but which he soon spent. His reputation was now rapidly rising, and both the trade and the public were anxious to secure further productions from his pen. He became the friend and companion of the wits and literary men of the day, and was admitted to the genial society of such men as Johnson, Reynolds, Burke, and Garrick. And of course he was able to indulge in his taste for fine dress, grand furniture, and spacious chambers, which he did to a ridiculous extent. But still he was the same careless, simple, gullible, sympathetic Irishman as when he sold his ballads at Dublin. Increased money for his writings only meant with him more money to spend and more to give away. The consequence of his improvidence was that, though he had hundreds of pounds coming in, he was nearly always in debt and occasionally in difficulties.

Besides a host of small productions, such as magazine articles, reviews, poetry, and memoirs, he wrote two large poems, two charming comedies; histories of Rome, Greece, and England; "The Citizen of the World," purporting to be letters by a Chinese Philosopher; and his largest work, "The History of Animated Nature."

In the spring of 1774, Goldsmith had an attack of fever, which his embarrassed affairs so heightened, that it soon

became evident to his friends that he was sinking under it. For a long while he would see no physician, and when one was at length brought, he persisted in prescribing for himself. At last, on Monday, the 4th of April, 1774, the life that had been so checkered with cloud and sunshine suddenly closed, and Oliver Goldsmith, poet, author, and historian, was dead at the comparatively early age of forty-six years.

His death was deeply felt by his friends Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds. He was privately interred in the burial-ground of the Temple Church; and two years later a medallion-portrait and tablet were set up to his memory in Poets' Corner, in Westminster Abbey. The inscription in Latin was written by Dr. Johnson, and shows how highly he thought of his departed friend. It has been thus translated :—

“OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH,  
A Poet, Naturalist, and Historian,  
who left scarcely any style of writing  
untouched,  
and touched nothing that he did not  
adorn :  
Of all the passions,  
whether smiles were to be moved  
or tears,  
a powerful, yet gentle master :  
In genius sublime, vivid, versatile ;  
in style elevated, clear, elegant,  
The love of Companions,  
the fidelity of Friends,  
and the veneration of Readers,  
have by this monument honoured the  
memory.”

Nor till he was dead did the world fully value this gifted writer; even his most intimate acquaintance had been struck by his eccentricities and failings, more than by his talents. His sudden death rudely awakened them

to his merits, and the eulogium then passed upon his works has been heartily concurred in by the ever-extending circle of readers to whom they have appealed. •

As a picture of fresh, simple country life, his "Vicar of Wakefield" has achieved an honoured place among English classics. It may be found in every library where our language is spoken, and it has been translated into every European tongue. His poetry is so popular that it might be said every alternate couplet has dropped into constant use as a quotation. His dramas are to-day as successful as ever; and his many prose works are still attractive for their elegant simplicity of style, even when, as in the case of his "Animated Nature," the facts are behind the age in scientific accuracy.

Yet this was the dunce who was pronounced impenetrably stupid, the butt of his schoolfellows, and the scorn and ridicule of his college-tutor. This was the youth who, after vain attempts to enter three different professions, became in turns a wandering minstrel, an apothecary's assistant, a school-usher, a printer's reader, a poor doctor, and a literary drudge.





## XI.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT NATURALIST.



MORE striking contrast to the poverty and obscurity of Goldsmith's early days could hardly be found than in the circumstances attending the youth of the subject of the present sketch.

Born in one of the fashionable squares of the metropolis, of parents possessed of great wealth, and the proprietors of large ancestral estates, and surrounded through his childhood and youth by all the advantages money could procure, it does indeed seem strange that he should have been a dunce.

Our hero was born in London, on the 2nd of February, 1743. His biographers do not tell us whether or not he had much difficulty in mastering the first rudiments of learning, but, judging by the sentiments he held later on with regard to Greek and Latin, it is very probable that his teacher had considerable difficulty in making him see the reasonableness of a rich man's son being obliged to learn anything. Up to the age of nine his education was in the hands of a private tutor. He was then sent to the public school at Harrow, where he remained for four years without making much progress in anything excepting his knowledge of schoolboy games.

At thirteen he was removed to the celebrated Eton school. Here he distinguished himself in all kinds of sports

and pastimes. He entered heartily into the established games of the playground, and became quite an adept at swimming, fishing, and boating. Directly school duties were over, if the day was warm, he would be off to the river for a row or a bathe. If the weather was unsuitable for that, he would organize a grand game at "hare and hounds," and with his companions scour the country for miles round in search of the two-legged hare. In the evening he would repair his fishing-tackle, and get rods and lines ready for the next quiet afternoon's sport, or else plan a game at football or cricket for the morrow.

But, alas ! though so energetic in the playground and in the field, Joseph—that was our hero's name—was careless and indolent in the class-room. He was the equal of most of the biggest boys in all matters of sport or adventure, but directly they passed the school-house door he had to part company with them and take a seat considerably lower than they. He could not, for the life of him, see any reason why he should learn Greek and Latin—the languages of nations who had been dead and buried ages ago. He knew little and cared less about these ancient peoples, their laws and literature, and his only sentiment regarding them was a sincere regret that their languages had not been buried with them. It seemed to him a most provoking thing that an English landed proprietor, with plenty of money to enable him to enjoy life in his own way, should be compelled to learn the musty language of antiquated heathens before he could be considered properly educated.

But however much he might protest against the study, he was obliged to conform to the rules of the school, and so he had to make some pretence of learning the hated lessons. As might have been expected under the circumstances, the idle young urchin spent as little time as possible over his studies, learnt as little as he dared, and that little very imperfectly.

In this way the first year of his stay at Eton was spent, when all at once he astonished his tutor by suddenly becoming industrious and attentive. He not only paid great heed to the lessons and prepared his exercises with painstaking care, but on several occasions the tutor found him studying in some quiet corner even while the shouts of his companions were loudest in the playground, and when one would have thought the most fascinating of romances would not have sufficed to hold him from joining in their sport.

Whatever could have effected such a marked change in our hero? Had the head-master called him on the carpet and given him a long lecture and a severe reprimand for neglecting his lessons? No. Had his father written him a letter urging him to devote himself to his studies with more diligence? Doubtless his father had written and spoken many such an exhortation, but his reformation was not due to any of them. Had he then suddenly conceived a taste for classic poetry and ancient history, which could only be gratified by an acquaintance with Greek and Latin? No, he never, either then or in after-life, showed any marked fondness for ancient literature.

What was it, then, that had been powerful enough so to revolutionize his ideas? Like the turning-points in most lives, the circumstance which produced this sudden change was very simple and apparently commonplace. One lovely summer's afternoon he and a number of others had gone for a bathe in the Thames, and so fond was he of the exercise, that he remained paddling and swimming in the clear, cool, refreshing stream after all his companions were tired. They accordingly dressed and started for the college, and shortly afterwards he left the water and prepared to follow them.

His way from the river lay through one of those charming country lanes, such as can only be seen in England, bordered with hedgerows bright with flowers



and wavy with the many varieties of flowering grasses. It was now early evening, the sun was setting in softened splendour, and a delicious calm and stillness seemed to have fallen on bird and leaf and insect. Our dunce felt an influence he had never felt before. The voice of Nature had reached the soul even of this romping, gamesome lad, and from that time forth Nature was his delight, her laws and mysteries his study.

His eyes were opened. He stooped to admire the charming hues of the flowers, the wondrous delicacy of the feathery fronds of grass, and the marvellous minuteness of all the varied vegetable life before him, and wondered he had never noticed such things before. His curiosity was excited. He wanted to know the names of the plants he saw, and marvelled that he should have seen them for so many years, and that he should have wantonly kicked and trampled such beautiful things without even knowing their names, or the simplest facts about their mode of growth or reproduction. And then the old bug-bear of the classics crossed his mind, and he exclaimed aloud, "How beautiful! Would it not be far more reasonable to make me learn the names of these plants than the Greek and Latin I am confined to?"

And perhaps our dunce was right. If he could only be taught one of the two, it certainly would seem wiser to teach him all that could be learnt about the natural history of his native land in preference to the political and social history of almost forgotten dynasties. But with the birth of this hunger for botanical knowledge came also the awakening of a sense of duty, and he wisely concluded that his first care ought to be to attend to the set studies of the school, and thus fulfil his father's intentions in sending him to Eton.

Accordingly he set to work manfully and steadily to master the languages he had so sadly neglected before, encouraged so to do possibly by a hint that in the writings

of Aristotle and Pliny he would find much information respecting the vegetable world. For though his new sense of duty impelled him to study Greek and Latin, the passionate thirst for knowledge of flowers and plants remained, and grew stronger day by day.

He asked some of the tutors if they could gratify his curiosity; but the utmost they could do was to tell him the dry Latin names for some of the commoner trees and herbs. He still persisted in his inquiries, however, and at last found, to his great joy, that, though the learned college tutors could not supply it, he could get much of the information he wanted from poor ignorant countrywomen.

In the many rambles which his new passion led him to make, he made the acquaintance of some old women who earned a few pence by gathering herbs for the druggists. With these women he struck a bargain, which was doubtless a very satisfactory one on both sides. They were to tell him all they knew about the various flowers and plants, and for every such description he agreed to pay a fee of sixpence. And now we may be sure he found plenty of employment for his pocket-money. Every day which was fine enough for herb-gathering the old women were out, and Joseph would wander off after lessons to meet them as they returned to town. On every such occasion one or more plants were brought for his inspection. The shape of the leaf, the colour of the flower, and the character of the root were pointed out, the time of its blossoming told, and the marks of similarity and contrast between it and other plants described. Besides this he doubtless got for his sixpence a full account of the medicinal properties of the plants, and a lot of superstitious nonsense about the planetary governments they were under, and the starry conjunctions under which they ought to be gathered.

Thus pleasantly and usefully the summer passed, and when Joseph went home for the holidays his head was still full of plants and flowers. To his great joy, he found

while rummaging in his mother's dressing-room one day an old tattered "Herbal." That was just what he had been wanting all along. There were the pictures of the plants, and their names, situations, and peculiarities detailed. He carefully packed the precious volume in his trunk, and, on his return to school, commenced by its assistance to arrange the specimen plants he had already collected.

The leisure hours of the next four years were occupied in a careful perusal of all the books he could find on his favourite subject, and in excursions for the purpose of procuring specimens. He had always been noted for his walking powers, and now he frequently wandered several miles away from Eton searching for new plants. One day, when so employed, he laid down to rest under a hedge and fell fast asleep. A gamekeeper coming up shortly afterwards, deceived by his dust-stained dress, concluded he was a poacher watching for game. He accordingly captured the young naturalist and marched him off to the residence of the nearest magistrate, who, of course, set him at liberty directly he heard his explanation.

The many plants our hero collected in these frequent excursions were carefully dried and arranged, so that before he left Eton he had quite a large number of specimens. He had also commenced the capture of butterflies, moths, and other insects, which he arranged in like manner, according to the best information he could get of their names and habits.

His father died when he was eighteen, but though this sad event made him the absolute owner of valuable estates, their acquisition did not cause him to give up his researches. He left Eton, and entered Christ Church College, Oxford, as a gentleman-commoner in December, 1760. To his great surprise and regret, he found that, though a professor of botany was appointed, no lectures on the science were given. He at once determined if possible to get the

deficiency supplied. He saw the botanical professor, got his permission for lectures to be delivered provided the students paid the lecturer's fees, and then posted off to Cambridge for a botanist to take the vacant post.

At the university Joseph Banks was not at first thought much of. Indeed, he never exhibited more than average ability in any other study than Natural History. When an old man, he was fond of telling how he was slighted by his fellow-students at this time. If he happened to go into any room where classical subjects were being discussed, the debaters would say, "There is Banks, but he knows nothing about Greek." Our hero did not reply, but consoled himself with the reflection that "he would soon beat them all in a kind of knowledge he thought infinitely more important." And so it was, for shortly afterwards, instead of being shunned by these learned classic scholars, he was frequently sought by them. If they were stuck fast on any question of Natural History, they would invariably say, "We must go to Banks."

He left Oxford on coming of age, but continued his scientific pursuits. He spent much of his leisure in fishing, combining a favourite sport with investigations of the habits and peculiarities of the fish. It was no unusual thing for him to spend hours—and occasionally he spent whole nights—on the Thames in the company of his friend the Earl of Sandwich, who was also an enthusiastic angler.

In the year 1766 he was elected a member of the Royal Society. In the same year he set out on a voyage of discovery to Newfoundland, where he made an extensive collection of the native plants, insects, etc.

Three years later the now-celebrated Captain Cook—then a little-known lieutenant—was sent out by the government in charge of an expedition having for its chief object the observance of the "transit of Venus"

from the island of Otaheite. By the influence of the Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Banks obtained permission to accompany the expedition. Together with his friend Dr. Solander, a distinguished pupil of Linnæus, he got the appointment of naturalist to the expedition. After a voyage of three years, during which he braved many dangers and hardships, he returned home with a vast amount of information respecting the geography and natural history of the South Sea Islands, and an immense collection of the native plants, birds, and insects.

A second expedition was planned a few years latter, and Banks again offered his services to the Government as naturalist thereto. His offer was accepted; but, though he engaged many servants and spent much money in preparation, he at last abandoned the enterprise in consequence of finding all his plans thwarted by the Comptroller of the Navy.

He set out, however, at his own cost, on a trip to Iceland, where he purchased a great number of Icelandic manuscripts, which, on his return, he presented to the British Museum. He and his party also made a careful survey of the rocks, volcanoes, and hot springs, and brought home a large collection of botanical and other specimens. On their way they visited the Hebrides, and, among other things, discovered the hitherto unnoticed peculiarity of the column-like formation of the rocks round the caves of Staffa.

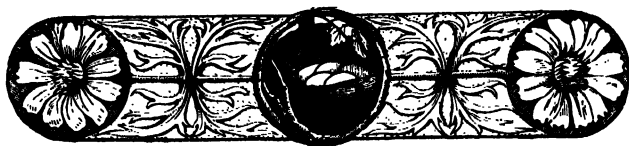
In 1777 Mr. Banks was elected President of the Royal Society, and to the duties of this high office he at once devoted himself with great zeal and ability. Two years later he married, and in 1781 he became Sir Joseph Banks, by virtue of a baronetcy conferred by King George III. In the course of the next year he lost, by death, his friend and co-worker, Dr. Solander. This event so saddened and discouraged him that he at once and for ever aban-

doned a large botanical work upon which they were jointly engaged.

He died on the 19th of June, 1820, leaving no family, and was buried at Heston, in Middlesex. A statue of him by the famous sculptor Chantrey was some years afterwards placed in the hall of the British Museum.

Sir Joseph Banks left no great discovery or voluminous treatise to hand his name down to posterity, and hence he is likely to be forgotten by all but scientific students. But, as these in their study of past discoveries meet with his oft-recurring name, he will always be gratefully remembered as an energetic and generous supporter of philosophic research and inquiry, and as the friend and patron of scientific men. His extensive library and botanical collection (which at his death he bequeathed to the British Museum) were always freely accessible to any who wished to consult them, and his house in London was a frequent gathering-place for the most distinguished literary and scientific men of the day, both English and foreign.





## XII.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME AN ARCHDEACON.

**S**OME readers may perhaps be disposed to question the propriety of naming the subject of our present sketch a dunce, on the ground that he was never so designated at school. But though not a dunce in the strict meaning of the term, he was certainly not a quick or brilliant scholar while at school, and at college, as we shall see, he was noted for his indolent habits. His early characteristics were therefore sufficiently unpromising to allow of his appearance in these pages.

Our hero's father was a poor clergyman, a native of Giggleswick, in Yorkshire, but having been elected a minor canon of Peterborough Cathedral, he had removed to that city in the year 1742. He there married a lady from his native parish, who, in addition to many useful and endearing qualities, possessed, what was no doubt a considerable attraction in the eyes of the poor parson, a small fortune of £400. Three years later the clergyman was offered the mastership of Giggleswick Free School, and, as the salary was an inducement to change, he resigned his minor canonship, and he and his wife and little two-year-old son William set out for the Yorkshire town. It is said that the parson and his wife rode together on the same horse, she with her baby in her lap, and that all their worldly goods were contained in a tea-chest.

When old enough, little William, of course, took his place in his father's school; and we may be sure he had every opportunity of distinguishing himself in study, for his father, who was an excellent scholar, would naturally help his son all he could in school or out. It might reasonably be expected, therefore, that he would astonish his fellows by his rapid progress and his great attainments. On the contrary, however, it is stated that, though he appeared studious and persevering, "his talents were but slowly developed; he was never brilliant or regarded as an accomplished scholar. His progress at school appears to have betrayed few indications of his future eminence." He is described as a thick-built, heavy-looking, inactive boy.

Nor was he noted, as so many "dunces" have been, for his exploits in the playground. He seems to have remained almost solitary among his schoolfellows. He did not care for their sports and pastimes, and they had no sympathy with his preferences and pursuits. They were, however, quick enough to notice his peculiarities, and, in ridicule of his awkward walk and a certain heavy seriousness in his manner, they nicknamed him "the Doctor." He was fond of mechanics, cock-fighting, talking to old women, and sitting in the law courts. He liked to chat with workmen, or indeed with any one who understood machinery. When the Assizes were on, he would often sit for hours coiled up in a corner of the court listening to the cases. By the old ladies he was, of course, unanimously voted a nice boy. His only sport was angling, and of this he was very fond. When he grew to a man he still remained a zealous wielder of the rod and line, though his success was so slight that it is supposed if all the fish he ever caught had been sold in a good market they would not have paid for his tackle.

An amusing story is told of "the Doctor's" boyhood. Actuated doubtless by a natural desire to imitate his father,



he was found one day at Giggleswick market-cross trying to preach to a number of old women and boys. The text he had chosen was from John, 1st chapter and 47th verse—and he was shouting at top of his voice,—“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” when a shrewd old lady, who knew him, said, “Ay, for sure, everybody knows thou art a guileless lad.”

When just turned sixteen our hero went to Cambridge, and entered Christ’s College in the humble position of a sizar—a fact which proves that, though his father was no longer in straitened circumstances, he was too economical to put himself to any unnecessary expense in procuring for his son a university education.

Perhaps it might have been parental partiality, or possibly the old schoolmaster could see in his son what was apparent to no one else, but after his admittance to the university he expressed himself quite enthusiastically as to his prospects. “My son is now gone to college,” said the old man. “He will turn out a great man—very great indeed. I am certain of it, for he has by far the clearest head I ever met with in my life.”

But bright as was the career the father pictured for his son, it seemed at one time very likely to be cut short by the son’s bad horsemanship. How ever he reached Cambridge without breaking his neck is quite a marvel. His father accompanied him mounted on a horse, while “the Doctor” was astride of a pony, from which he contrived to fall no fewer than seven times in the course of the journey. The old gentleman was at first quite alarmed at hearing his son’s cry of fear and seeing him roll off into the hedgerow. But it is possible to get accustomed to the most startling events if they only occur often enough, and so before they reached Cambridge the good old parson had got quite used to his son’s falls. So if he heard a scuffle, followed by a thud on the turf, he merely turned half-round in his saddle, and, with a touch of his native

prudence, said to the prostrate rider, "Get up and take care of thy money, lad."

William never became a good horseman. When a resident tutor at Cambridge he kept a horse, but he was never known to ride it. He used it occasionally in a chaise; but, to the astonishment of everybody, had it kept at a stable about three miles away. One of his friends asked him one day for what purpose he kept a horse.

"Why, for the same purpose as other persons keep horses; for exercise, certainly," replied William.

"But you never ride," said his friend.

"No," said our hero; "but I walk almost every day to see it, and that answers quite as well."

Later on in life, when our hero had really become "the Doctor," and when horse exercise became almost an essential of health, he seriously set about mastering the difficulties of the art of horsemanship. From a consciousness of his grotesque appearance, and a fear of ridicule, he practised riding in his private grounds; but some parts of these were open to observation from the road, and many an awkward tumble and ungraceful posture were witnessed without his knowledge. His horse exercise became a great source of amusement and diversion to his parishioners, and one of them once chalked across his rectory gates the announcement, "Feats of horsemanship here every day, by an eminent performer."

But let us return to our hero at Christ's College. His entrance there afforded abundant food for ridicule and jest to the undergraduates. They made great fun of this awkward, heavy-looking youth, with his country-made clothes, and his Yorkshire dialect. He was soon known for his fondness for attending country fairs, listening to strolling players, and watching puppet-shows. Like the boys at Giggleswick, the students at Cambridge gave him a nickname, and this time he was christened "Tommy Potts." He was notorious for his indolence. He got up

late every day, and was generally the last to slink in for morning prayers; and on the two days in each week when it was allowable to neglect the college lectures, he always indulged himself by lying in bed until near midday.

And yet, though such an unpromising student, our hero had of one subject at least—mathematics—such a thorough knowledge, that even those who laughed at him most could not help but respect him. He was, besides, a good-tempered fellow, and always ready to laugh at his own blunders, so he soon made a circle of friends among his fellow-collegians. He had been fortunate to secure two or three scholarships at the college, and the income from these so helped his slender resources as to prevent any necessity for stinginess. Consequently William entered freely and heartily into the frequent amusements and constant convivialities of university life.

The first two years of his stay at college were passed, as he himself says, “happily but unprofitably.” Occasionally he studied very hard, and sometimes, even amidst the clatter and confusion of a coffee-house, he would read persistently; but, as a rule, he took matters very quietly. He spent as much time in bed as he dared, strolled about the country to fairs and wakes, and spent his evenings in the merry parties of college friends, keeping it up usually until very late.

At last he was roused from his indolent indulgence by a most remarkable incident. He had been out one night at the usual social gathering, and had got to bed very late. At five o'clock the next morning he was awakened by a noise in his chambers, and to his great astonishment, on opening his eyes, found by his bedside one of his convivial companions of the preceding night—a young man more noted for his wealth than his learning.

“I have been thinking,” said the unexpected visitor, “what a great fool you are. I could do nothing, probably,

were I to try, and can afford the life I lead; you could do everything, and cannot afford it. I have had no sleep all night on account of these reflections, and am now come solemnly to inform you that if you persist in your indolence, I must renounce your society."

The unexpected appearance of his friend, the strange earnestness of his manner, and the forcible common sense of his admonition, produced a profound impression on the hitherto easy-going undergraduate. It may seem, perhaps, a queer way of starting a reformation of indolent habits, but he lay in bed nearly the whole of the day pondering what seemed to him almost like a ghostly visitation.

He had now reached the turning-point in his career. He speedily resolved to mend his ways, and no longer to waste his precious opportunities. He accordingly marked out a plan of study, to which he rigidly adhered. He had his fire laid ready over-night, so that he could light it himself in the morning. Instead of sleeping till noon, he rose every morning at five o'clock. He read on various subjects throughout the day, excepting the hours occupied in attending prayers and lectures; and, in place of spending his evenings in frivolous, though perhaps harmless, conviviality, he continued his studies until about nine o'clock, when he made a practice of going every night to a neighbouring refreshment-house, and there partaking of a quiet frugal supper.

He never fell back into his indulgent habits. His ambition once roused, he set himself eagerly to attain the highest university honours. He sought out and placed himself under the best tutor he could procure, and with industry, perseverance, and courage gave himself heart and will to the accomplishment of his wish. As might be expected, his steady labour and earnest application secured their reward, and in the year 1763—before he had attained his twenty-first year—he took his degree of Bachelor of

Arts. But it was, perhaps, somewhat beyond expectation that he should really carry off the highest honours of his university, and many of his college acquaintances must have stared to see at the top of the list, as senior wrangler, the name of William Paley—our old friend, *alias* “the Doctor,” *alias* “Tommy Potts.”

But, though he had achieved such an honourable distinction, our hero was not at once raised to a position of independence and dignity. He had still to go through “the valley of humiliation.” His first situation was the very trying one of second usher in an academy at Greenwich. The proud proprietor of this seminary made the position still more humbling, by compelling our senior wrangler to sit behind the schoolroom door, and requiring him to wear a full-sized wig, which gave him a very ridiculous appearance, to say nothing of its hiding his own handsome hair, of which the young man was somewhat vain. The first time Paley went down to Yorkshire wearing this absurd wig, it made him look so unlike himself, that he was actually mistaken by his friends for his old uncle.

For three years Paley remained at the Greenwich Academy, and then, throwing aside the obnoxious wig, he presented himself for ordination, and became assistant curate. As a preacher he attracted but little attention, though his sermons were carefully prepared and able discourses. His voice was harsh, his elocution defective, and his gestures awkward. Indeed, he seems to have neglected all the arts of oratory, from a mistaken idea that the subject matter alone ought to be a sufficient attraction without their aid.

In the year 1766 he was elected a fellow of his college, a post worth about £100 a year, but which enabled him to perform several other college duties which raised his income to about £180.

His first published work appeared in the year 1774

The Bishop of Carlisle had discussed in print the desirability or otherwise of continuing the custom of compelling every candidate for holy orders to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles, and his production had been very severely criticized by a tract issued from the Clarendon Press. Paley took up his pen on behalf of religious liberty, and in defence of his friend the bishop. The result was an anonymous pamphlet, which, by its shrewd sense, close logic, and clever argument, utterly routed his opponents. But, though the publication was a great success and was favourably noticed by the reviewers, Paley deemed it prudent not to announce himself publicly as its author. He feared the Church dignitaries were not quite prepared for some of the bolder arguments he had used, and, with his characteristic prudence, he did not care to prejudice his chances of preferment thereby.

In the next year the Bishop of Carlisle presented him with the living of Musgrave, near Appleby; but, as he had to resign his college appointments, the change was rather against him in a pecuniary point of view. He, however, accepted it as an instalment of future good, married a lady he had become acquainted with at Carlisle, and settled down as a quiet country parson, filling up his leisure with study and fishing. Before twelve months had passed the Bishop of Carlisle rewarded his confidence by another living--that of Dalston--which made up for the loss he had sustained by resigning his college fellowship.

And now preferments followed each other with wonderful quickness, and since he had not by birth or marriage any claim on the good will of the donors, we may fairly accept them as testimonies to the esteem in which he was held as a Christian and a scholar. In 1777 he was made Vicar of Appleby, with an income of £200 a year. In 1780 he was appointed to a prebendal stall in Carlisle Cathedral, which brought in £400 a year; and a little

over twelve months afterwards he was made Archdeacon of Carlisle, and presented with the living of Great Salkeld, worth £140 a year. In accepting this last appointment he resigned the vicarage of Appleby.

While these preferments were being crowded on him, he was busily preparing his first great work, entitled "Principles of Morality and Politics." When it was completed, however, he could find no publisher to undertake it. Paley asked one hundred guineas for the copyright, but as no one would buy, he at last plucked up his courage and, in 1785, published it at his own cost and risk. The book at once claimed attention, and sold so well, that the very publisher who had declined to give a hundred guineas for it now offered £250, and at last paid down £1000 for the copyright.

Five years later appeared his celebrated work on the life and writings of St. Paul, entitled "*Horæ Paulinæ*." Its publication was followed by a presentation to the living of Addington and to the vicarage of Stanwix, worth together about £200. In exchange for the latter he gave up the vicarage of Dalston.

In the year 1794 Paley published his third great work, "*A View of the Evidences of Christianity*," a work which at once attracted the attention of all classes of society by its clever arrangement, logical ability, and acute reasoning. It procured him the notice of the whole bench of Bishops, and, in acknowledgment of his manful defence of Christianity against the rampant infidelity of the day, he was loaded with preferments. He was made a prebendary of St. Paul's, London, by Dr. Porteus, and created sub-dean of Lincoln by Dr. Pretyman. He now proceeded to Cambridge and took his degree of Doctor of Divinity, and, while spending a few days with his friends there, was surprised to receive a letter from Dr. Barrington, Bishop of Durham—a perfect stranger—presenting him with the living of Bishops Wearmouth. This living was worth

over £1200 a year, and its rectory was equal to many a bishop's palace in size and magnificence.

The remainder of Paley's days were spent at the rectory of Bishops Wearmouth or at his deanery at Lincoln, and at each of these places he continued his literary labours, being now engaged on his "Natural Theology," which he intended should make up his works into a system of theology. His health, however, began to give way, and his work was often interrupted by the great pain he suffered. In consequence of inability to discharge the duties, he resigned the Archdeaconry of Carlisle in 1804, but this still left him in possession of livings to the value of nearly £3000 a year.

On the 25th of May, 1805, a violent attack of his old disorder carried him off, and he was buried in Carlisle Cathedral. His loss was sincerely mourned by all who knew him either personally or by his works.

A few years ago a monument was erected to his memory in the cathedral which contains his remains. But his best memorial will still be found in the works he has left behind, and which, by their convincing argument and happy illustration, will long retain their popularity and usefulness.





### XIII.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT SURGEON.

**A** HUNDRED and fifty years ago there lived at Long Calderwood, a village near Glasgow, a Scottish laird blessed with a small farm and a large family. The youngest of his ten children, a boy named John, then about eight years of age, was the pet of the family, his father's pride, and his mother's idol. This boy is the subject of our present sketch.

Although, in consequence of living upon his ancestral estate, John's father had a right to be called a "laird," he was by no means a wealthy man. His estate was but a small one, and he was only able to rear his large family in frugal comfort. The daughters learnt and practised housewifely accomplishments, and the sons, after receiving the good plain education for which Scotland is famous, were employed about the farm, or sent to learn a business elsewhere. One of them—William—having shown a taste for book-learning, had been sent to Glasgow University to qualify for the ministry.

Such had been the judicious training of all the elder members of the family, but with wee Johnnie a very different and most unwise course was adopted. In regard to this child of their old age the Scotch couple seem to

have lost all their shrewd common sense, and to have been guided entirely by their fondly foolish favoritism. The youngster was, of course, quick to see that he could get whatever he wanted by crying for it, and that he could have his own way in almost anything if he only whimpered and pouted sufficiently. It was, therefore, no fault of his that he grew up a thoroughly spoiled, petted child, or that when he began to attend school he stopped away half his time, and usually neglected his lessons when he was there.

When our dunce was ten years of age his indulgent father died; but the mother had been equally blamable in giving way to her son's whims, and so the petting was continued. About this time he was sent to the Glasgow Grammar School, but, as before, he was allowed to amuse himself at his own sweet will, to learn his lessons or not, to go to school or stay away, just as he pleased. So, notwithstanding the advantages of a celebrated public school, he grew up a thorough "dunce." Indeed, it is said it was only with great difficulty that his teachers managed to drive into him sufficient learning to enable him to read and write as well as his father's ploughboy could have done.

In accordance with an old Scotch custom with regard to the sons of "lairds," an attempt was made to give our hero some knowledge of Latin. But if English had been almost too much for his inattentive head to master, it was not to be expected that the still drier study of a dead language would be easily accomplished. After trying every means for a long time to interest him in the study, his teachers at last gave it up as perfectly hopeless. This dose of Latin seems to have been more than Johnnie could stand, for he shortly afterwards expressed a wish to leave school altogether. After a reasonable amount of pleading and pestering he, as usual, carried his point, and left school for ever.

And now what a glorious life he led for the next year or two! He had always done pretty much as he liked, but still he had known such unpleasant things as having to go to school, and having to sit still in the class; for we may be sure while he was there the master would take care he held his book and looked at it, whether he learned anything or not. But now books and school were done with, and from morning to night, so long as he did not interfere with anybody else, he did whatever he liked.

He revelled in all the village sports, went off on birds'-nesting exploits, or engaged in fishing expeditions in the neighbouring streams. For, however great a dunce, he had never been an idle, sleepy, inactive boy. He had an abundance of energy and vivacity in his composition. When mere play got wearisome, he exhausted his superabundant strength in "playing at work" about the farm. Sometimes he took a sudden liking for digging in the garden, or, attracted by the pleasure of getting over shoe-tops in mud, he would take a turn with the hedgers and ditchers. He liked the sport, too, of driving the stray cows from the meadow, and doubtless the horses on the farm, had they spoken, could have told many a tale of stolen rides that Master John had had when they were supposed to be quietly grazing in the pasture.

But enjoyable and healthful as this free-and-easy, out-of-door sort of life doubtless was, it was very evident that it could not always last. Even the mother's partial eye could see that unless this "ne'er-do-weel laddie" greatly altered, his future would be very unhappy and profitless alike to himself and others. The family estate had passed to the eldest son, and it was impossible to expect him to bear the expense of a useless, careless dunce much longer. The other members of the family were prepared in one way or another to shift for themselves. The sisters were married, and the brothers were engaged in various occupations, having either the present enjoyment or future

promise of a moderate competence. And here was our "dunce"—the favourite Johnnie—seventeen years of age, without acquaintance with any trade or regular employment, and with about enough education to fit him for running errands or delivering parcels.

What he thought about the matter we have no means of knowing. There were probably several councils held to consider what could be done with our "dunce." Perhaps he felt keenly the humiliation of being dependent on his brother. At any rate, he soon settled the matter for them by choosing a trade and engaging himself to learn it. One of his sisters had married a cabinet-maker at Glasgow, and one day that John was at their house he rambled into the workshop and dallied with the tools, from the same motive which had prompted him to help in the hedging and ditching on the home farm. While thus amusing himself he considered his future career. He knew himself unqualified for any business demanding much education, and yet felt it imperative that he should do something, and do it at once. He saw that cabinet-making paid fair wages, that it offered a reasonable variety of occupation, and that his brother-in-law required assistance in the shop. So, concluding that one sort of work was to him pretty much the same as another if it supplied him with money for his wants, he offered to work for his sister's husband, and was at once taken on to learn the trade.

And now our "dunce" expended his energy in sawing and planing, and very hard work he found it. He was no longer able to please himself in his choice of occupation or time of doing it. As a learner he had, of course, to begin with the roughest, heaviest, and most monotonous jobs, and as his back ached and his hands blistered he doubtless often remembered with regretful longing the happy days at school, or the still happier ones at home. But, as has been said before, however careless or inattentive our "dunce" had been, he had never been really

indolent or sluggish. There was an eager activity and a sturdy courage in his disposition which enabled him to work pluckily on with hammer and chisel, saw and plane until, to his brother-in-law's surprise, the "ne'er-do-weel" of the family turned out a very fair workman.

For three years our hero worked away at tables, chairs, and cupboards, and then an event happened which seemed to becloud altogether his lately brightening prospects. His brother-in-law from some cause or other got involved in difficulties and became a bankrupt. Of course the business was suspended, and when all affairs were settled the bankrupt was not disposed to resume it. Here, then, John found himself again without occupation, and, though he had a trade in his fingers, he saw no opportunity of getting work at it. And besides that, he seems to have taken a dislike to the trade, though whether this arose from the occupation itself or from a newly born ambition it is hard to say.

His brother William—the one set apart for the ministry, —after five years' study at Glasgow University, had suddenly decided to renounce the cure of souls for the curing of bodies; in other words, he gave up theology and went heart and soul into the study of medicine. His success was as remarkable as his choice of the profession had been sudden. At the time our dunce—John Hunter—found himself thrown out of employment as a cabinet-maker, William Hunter, the doctor, was creating quite a stir in London as a lecturer on anatomy. Now it occurred to John that he too might as well be a surgeon.

Why our hero should wish to cut and saw human limbs in preference to those of tables and chairs is not very clear. Possibly it was not the difference in occupation so much as the higher rank and better pay accompanying the former which at first fired his ambition to emulate his brother. Be that as it may, John wrote to William offering his services as assistant in the dissecting-room,

and hinting pretty strongly that if he did not give him the post he should at once enlist for a soldier, as he had nothing else to look to.

Happily, the elder brother entertained the proposal. John Hunter, the late cabinet-maker, went to London to help his brother William, the surgeon, and was at once installed as anatomical assistant. The elder brother was of course anxious to know what sort of assistance he was likely to get from this raw surgeon-apprentice. He accordingly gave him a human arm, and having given directions how he wished it dissected, left him to his task. To his surprise he found, on his return, that John had treated the limb in a singularly able manner, and had succeeded admirably in showing the particular organs he wished exhibited. It is probable that his previous experience in handling edged tools rendered him somewhat more dexterous with the scalpel and dissecting-knife, but the ability he displayed can only be accounted for on the supposition of a special and natural adaptation for the profession.

Hunter's astonishing success at the outset of his surgical career was not a fortunate accident. It was followed by progressive successes in the art. But, though skilful in dissecting, our hero was still a dunce. It was no easy task for him to read the surgical works which were then published, and his writing was so faulty and laborious as to make the copying of extracts from such books extremely tedious. And, then, many of the treatises he wished to read were crowded with Latin and Greek, and the terms used in the art were largely derived from those languages, which to him were unknown tongues. Under such disadvantages he had to struggle on in his chosen profession. In these elementary studies he was several years behind the majority of students whom he met at his brother's lectures or at the hospitals. No wonder he regretted his inattention at school, and

bemoaned the mistaken kindness which had allowed him to have his own way.

With his characteristic energy, however, he pluckily faced his difficulties, and before he had been in his brother's dissecting-room twelve months he had so far succeeded as to be considered competent to take a share in instructing the students. He now became a pupil of Cheselden, the distinguished anatomist, and in 1751 attended St. Bartholomew's Hospital. In 1753 Hunter entertained the idea of becoming a physician, and entered himself as a commoner at Oxford University in order to remedy the defects of his neglected education. He however changed his mind, and the next year entered himself as a pupil of St. George's Hospital, in order to qualify for the post of surgeon there at some future time when a vacancy might occur.

About this time William Hunter recognized his brother's usefulness by making him a partner in his school of surgery. For five years John continued this connection, and delivered a part of each annual course of lectures. But all this time he was pursuing his medical and anatomical studies with unabating ardour. He only allowed himself four hours out of the twenty-four for sleep. All the rest of his time, excepting the short space allotted to his meals, was spent in the lecture-room, the hospital, or his study. Science he pursued with the most persistent attentions. His small acquaintance with the discoveries and theories of his predecessors in these paths of knowledge gave to his researches an originality and independence highly beneficial to the interests of scientific discovery, though from the same cause he sometimes spent weeks in studying a question which he might have settled in as many minutes had he been well acquainted with the published works of others. It was no unusual thing for him to announce to his brother, as a fresh discovery or an original suggestion, some fact or theory which had already

become stereotyped in the standard works of anatomical science.

In the year 1760 his close and unremitting study had so far weakened his health that it was considered prudent to check the progress of an affection of the heart by a residence in a warmer climate. He accordingly obtained an appointment as staff surgeon, and went to Belle-Isle and afterwards to Spain. He remained in active service in Spain until 1763, when he returned to London completely restored to health.

Hunter now commenced practice as a surgeon, but at first got few patients. He was a plain outspoken Scotchman, with few of the graces or arts of polished society about him, and his free and somewhat rough manner did damage to his practice. The fact was he cared not so much for patients as for pay. His only reason for commencing practice was to obtain means for further pursuing his scientific investigations. To increase his income he also commenced giving lectures, but here again his uninviting, blunt manner retarded his success, for, though his lectures gave evidence of remarkable talent and research, he never had a class of more than twenty pupils.

But, notwithstanding his rough Scotch accent and his bluff demeanour, his talents, his industry, and his research were steadily raising him year by year in the estimation of all competent to form an opinion. In the year 1767 Hunter was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. In 1768 he was appointed surgeon to St. George's Hospital, and thus provided with the post he had all along coveted, and which increased his income sufficiently to enable him to follow up his studies with renewed vigour.

In his scientific investigations he never spared time, labour, or money. He industriously studied every branch of natural history and comparative anatomy, physiology and pathology. To illustrate each department of these sciences he was engaged in forming a museum on a most



extensive scale. To provide the objects for this collection, and to satisfy himself at first hand on all points of natural history and comparative anatomy, he procured at enormous cost hundreds of specimens of the varied species and tribes of animals, birds, and reptiles. When possible, he bought these alive from sailors and others visiting foreign parts; and the grounds surrounding his residence were more like a menagerie than a gentleman's garden. In cages, pens, and outhouses he frequently kept leopards, jackals, bears, and other unlikely pets. On more than one occasion his own life and the safety of his neighbours were in imminent peril from some of these animals being allowed to escape from their confinement.

In 1773 Hunter suffered from a second attack of heart disease, but recovered sufficiently to pursue his labours. In 1776 he was appointed Surgeon Extraordinary to the King, and shortly afterwards Inspector-General of Hospitals and Surgeon-General. In 1785 his heart was again seriously affected, and he recovered but slowly.

From this time the disease gained on him, and any unusual excitement was sufficient to bring on an attack. The symptoms increased until October, 1793, when, while engaged in a dispute with the other hospital surgeons, he became so excited at what he considered an insult offered him, that he hurriedly left the room, and, on entering the next, he fell dead in the arms of the hospital physician.

Thus died, at the age of sixty-five, one of the most industrious workers our country has produced. The universal regret of the scientific world at the loss of such a man was mingled with wonder at the monument he had erected to himself in his colossal museum. It was found to consist of over ten thousand objects. There were nearly a thousand skeletons, three thousand specimens of plants and animals preserved or stuffed, twelve hundred fossils, and two thousand five hundred objects illustrating diseases and their treatment. This gigantic enterprise, conceived

and worked out by the genius and industry of one man, was purchased by Government for fifteen thousand pounds, and presented to the College of Surgeons, London, where it may now be seen.

By the universal consent of his successors, John Hunter is acknowledged as the greatest man that ever practised surgery. Though his brother William holds a deservedly high position in the list of professors of the surgical art, John far surpasses him in the extent and value of his researches. The rough, uneducated "dunce," after three years lost in learning the trade of a cabinet-maker, outstripped all his rivals, notwithstanding their advantages of a college training, and gained a name and fame which to-day are as great as ever.





#### XIV.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT GENERAL.

**A** CENTURY ago there lived at Dungan Castle, in the county of Meath, Ireland, a nobleman of English origin, but whose ancestors had for several generations held estates in the Emerald Isle. His lordship was by no means ambitious to figure either as a statesman or a warrior. His tastes were refined and domestic, and the duties and dignities which fell to his lot as a landowner and county magnate were more than enough to gratify the little desire he had for public life. He had a wonderful taste for music, and great natural musical ability. Although he had received scarcely any instruction in the art, he succeeded in distinguishing himself as a composer. His glees, madrigals, and church tunes not only hit the popular fancy of the day, but are still remembered and sung. Who, for instance, is not familiar with "Lord Mornington's Chant"?

Well, it is to this musical nobleman's family we have to go for the subject of our present sketch. His fourth son, Arthur, was born at Dungan Castle—the country seat of the family—on May-day, in the year 1769, and no doubt the event was celebrated by the noble lord in right joyful style. Our dunce's infancy would, therefore, be passed amid the romantic associations of his birthplace, and probably he

was often hushed to sleep by his Irish nurse crooning in his ears some weird legend of the former owners of the old castle, which was a relic of Norman rule. His early boyhood would be spent in rambling about the green pastures of Meath, or in visits to the family mansion at Dublin, when some grand military parade or civic ceremonial called his father to the metropolis.

Unfortunately, there is very little recorded authentically of young Arthur's boyhood, and though he appears to have attended several schools, few facts are reported respecting them. His earliest education was doubtless undertaken in the nursery, and some bonnie Irish nursemaid probably had the difficult task of initiating him into the mysteries of the A B C. He appears to have been early sent to a private school at Portarlington, and while there he first got the title of dunce. The Earl of Leitrim, who was sent to the same school, always spoke of him in after-life as a singularly dull, backward boy.

His next school was an English one. Probably the family had removed to London for a time. At any rate, we find him in a school at Chelsea kept by a clergyman. But the English parson succeeded no better than the Irish schoolmaster, and little Arthur remained a quiet, shy, dull boy. He was a very singular lad. He cared for neither books nor play. This may partly be accounted for on the ground that his health was not vigorous, but though that might prevent him joining in the more boisterous sports, there were plenty of quiet games he might have played.

Instead of bounding out of school directly the duties were over, as the other boys did, he never seemed in a hurry to shut up his book or lay down his slate—not for any love he bore them, but merely because he had no enthusiasm for his schoolfellows' amusements. He generally sauntered listlessly through the excited throng of youngsters, and going up to a large tree in the centre of the playground, he would idly lean against it and sleepily

watch his fellow-scholars as they raced and jumped and frolicked. It was vain for his friends to try to induce him to join in their sport. He remained fixed against the tree as if tied there, till the master's signal again summoned him to the schoolroom.

Sometimes it happened that the boys were hard up for one to make a set in some game, and, then after exhausting entreaties, they would try to drag our dunce from his resting-place, and by sheer force compel him to play. It was of no use, however. The languid, unexcitable youngster had some courage about him after all, and though it wore the biggest boy in the school who molested him, he would pluckily stand up and fight rather than give in. And although apparently so unimpressionable, he was no mere careless observer of the games around him. If any of the boys tried to cheat or take an unfair advantage, Arthur would be sure to detect, and expose the wrong, and, in the case of youngsters, insist on their having their rights.

During his stay at the Chelsea Academy, Arthur spent one of his holidays amid the beautiful scenery of North Wales. While there he engaged in a rather ludicrous combat. In one of his rambles he met a little Welsh boy coming from school with his sister, a girl about two years younger than our hero. Arthur commenced a game of marbles with the little boy, and the sister walked on. She had not gone out of hearing, however, before she heard her brother calling after her to come back and take his part. In some way or other the players had disagreed as to the ownership of a certain number of marbles. Perhaps the young Welshman was a bad loser, and objected to Arthur taking marbles he had fairly won. Be that as it may, the girl warmly espoused her brother's side in the quarrel. She came flying back along the lane, piping in a shrill voice a dictionary full of reproaches in Welsh, which tongue was, of course, mere gibberish to our young

Irishman. She made a snatch at our hero and demanded the disputed marbles. He resented her interference, and claimed them as his. The result was a battle. Their blood was up, and Young Ireland and Young Wales fought fiercely for a time. At last our hero had to give in, notwithstanding his being two years older than his antagonist, and after giving up the marbles he went home crying.

Arthur's father died when he was twelve years of age, and his mother shortly afterwards removed him from Chelsea, and sent him to the public school at Eton, where his brother Richard—the heir to the title—had already been sent. Richard had taken a high position in the school, and on leaving it for the university he carried with him many honours. Arthur did nothing of the kind. He was idle in school, and indolent in the playground. One writer says of him at this time, "His intellect was rated at a very low standard. He was a 'dab' at no game—could neither handle a bat nor an oar." He seems, however, to have been a little more sociable, though generally shy and contemplative, and here as at Chelsea he had an occasional fight. He seems, too, to have become fond of fun and mischief. There was an old lady relative of the family living in Shropshire, who was remarkably fond of gossip, and consequently easily imposed upon. So on one occasion, when Richard and Arthur had gone to spend a holiday at her house, the mischievous young urchins resolved to play the old lady a trick. They accordingly made up a wonderful tale about their sister having run off with the footman; and the rogues managed the details so cleverly that the old lady quite believed their story, and was in consequence much concerned at the scandal that would attach to the family.

Our hero did not stay long at Eton. His progress at that celebrated school was so slow that his mother was half inclined to think it not worth while troubling further about him. His eldest brother, after a brilliant career at

school, was now distinguishing himself at college, and giving evidence of abilities which would qualify him for the highest and most responsible stations.

But to Lady Mornington it seemed evident that Arthur would never become a statesman or a diplomatist. He lacked all the tact, learning, and polish necessary for these distinguished offices. There was only one thing she could make of him, and that was a soldier. In the army wealth and patronage were often sufficient to secure promotion, in spite of the lack of ability. She could command enough of either wealth or influence to serve the purpose, and so it was decided that Arthur should join what was then called the "fool's profession."

She, however, sent him to Brighton for a course of private study, apparently as a last attempt at giving him a good education, and from there took him with her on setting out to travel abroad. She, however, found her "ugly boy" somewhat in the way, and accordingly left him behind at a military school at Douai, in France. She did not see him again for two years, but in the mean time arranged for his removal to Angers, another French town, where he studied for six years at its celebrated military institution. He seems to have taken more kindly to military studies than he had done to his books, and was noticed for the general correctness of his behaviour. He was, however, still a shy, awkward lad.

Having passed the first stages of his military education, our hero obtained a commission as ensign in the 73rd regiment of foot soldiers by the time he was eighteen. In consequence of influential family connections, his promotion was very rapid. He had five promotions in a little over five years.

On attaining his majority in 1790, Arthur was elected a member of the Irish Parliament for Trim, a borough which generally elected the man chosen by the Mornington family. He did not greatly distinguish himself as a

senator. He seldom spoke, but when he did it was always on some subject he understood, and consequently his remarks deserved and obtained respectful attention. It is said of him at this time that he was "ruddy-faced and juvenile in appearance, and popular among young men of his age and station, though his address was unpolished, and he evinced no promise of celebrity."

He certainly could not have entertained any ambition of making a position for himself as a statesman, for about this time we find him applying for such a humble post as the Commissionership of Customs. One would have thought there would be no difficulty in the way of his getting such an appointment, but his shortcomings with regard to education were so well known, that the office was refused on the ground of his incompetence to fulfil its duties.

In the army, however, such considerations seemed to have less weight, for he was favoured with frequent advances in rank. Among other promotions he was appointed aide-de-camp to the Viceroy. This necessitated his constant attendance at Dublin Castle, where the Lord-Lieutenant held his vice-regal court with a splendour and magnificence almost rivalling that of the royal court itself.

As might be expected, the extravagant style of living at the castle compelled our young aide-de-camp to incur expenses beyond his present ability to meet. His private income was small, and his appointment almost honorary, and so he soon found himself in straitened circumstances. His office as a Member of Parliament protected him from personal annoyance from his creditors, but as an honourable man he felt his insolvency to be an intolerable burden. He was lodging at the time in the house of a well-to-do bootmaker. This man somehow heard of his difficulties, and so good an opinion had he of the young officer that he at once offered to lend him a sum of money



to discharge all his debts. Arthur gladly welcomed the opportunity of having one willing creditor in place of a score of involuntary ones, and at once accepted the money.

The confidence of the gentleman just referred to is all the more surprising from the fact that our hero had at this time gained for himself a very undesirable reputation for fun, frivolity, and practical joking. It was fashionable then for gentlemen to wear as a cravat a piece of lace, which was slipped through a slit in the shirt-collar and negligently tied in front. To twitch this cravat out unawares was a favourite amusement of our young aide-de-camp as he danced attendance in the state apartments at the castle. The ladies, too, seem to have fallen in for a share of his practical jokes, for it is reported that when the Dublin ladies were invited to a picnic they were in the habit of accepting only on conditions that "that mischievous boy Arthur should not be of the party." Not a very promising beginning this, for a stern soldier.

But our hero was not destined long to remain a mere "carpet knight." In the year 1793 he was made Colonel of the 33rd Regiment, and in the next year was despatched to the Netherlands to reinforce the unfortunate army of the Duke of York. His regiment was ordered to cover the retreat of the main force from Antwerp to the sea, and in this inglorious service did our hero get his first experiences of actual warfare. There was, of course, no opportunity for distinguishing himself, but he commanded his men in such a way as to give satisfaction..

To his credit be it said that before leaving England he arranged for his pay to go against the loan he had obtained from the bootmaker. In a few months the amount was repaid, but the obligation never. In after years, again and again did Arthur remember and gratefully requite the kindness done him in his time of necessity.

In the year 1796 our hero was sent with his regiment

to India, where his brother Richard now held the high office of Governor-General. Here Arthur greatly distinguished himself. By his skill, perseverance, and courage he succeeded in bringing into subjection several of the most rebellious of the native princes. His many victories—most of them won in engagements at great odds—secured for him the thanks of both Houses of Parliament and the title of Knight Commander of the Bath.

After seven years' service in India, Sir Arthur returned to England. In the next year he married, and in 1807 was entrusted with a small force to try and check Napoleon in his designs upon Denmark. For his successful conduct of this difficult enterprise he was again thanked by Parliament. The next few months were spent in peaceful services at home. He had been appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland, and, much to the surprise of those who remembered his boyhood, he fulfilled the duties of his office with great regularity and ability.

In 1808 he was again in the field. He was put in charge of an army of ten thousand men, and sent to help in driving the French from Spain and Portugal. He very quickly vanquished the French forces; but, to the surprise of the nation, and to his own indignation, he was superseded just as victory was secured. A convention was called, and the result was that the French were allowed to get off "scot-free." As one of our poets has put it, the French "policy regained what arms had lost." Sir Arthur returned home, and, on examination before a committee of the House of Commons, clearly acquitted himself of any participation in the disgraceful treaty.

On the death of the gallant Sir John Moore, our hero was appointed to succeed him as Chief Commander of the Peninsular Army, and he at once resolved on a series of well-planned operations. He had a force inferior to the French, whose army was well disciplined, well equipped, and well officered; he was often kept short of provisions

by the home Government, and his allies were untrustworthy; and yet, throughout the whole campaign, his defeats were few and slight. His undaunted courage, his skilful strategy, and his decisive promptitude carried all before them. The victories of Talavera, Salamanca, Vittoria, Orthes, and Toulouse, and the conquest of the fortresses of Busaco, Badajoz, and Ciudad Rodrigo were successive stages in the glorious career which culminated in the memorable battle of Waterloo.

Honours were, of course, heaped on the successful commander. After the battle of Talavera our hero was created Lord Wellington. The victory of Salamanca won for him the title of Marquis, the Order of "The Golden Fleece," and a vote of £100,000 from Parliament for the purchase of an estate which should, with his titles, descend to his posterity. After the decisive battle of Toulouse, he was made Marquis of Douro and Duke of Wellington, another sum of £100,000 was voted for him out of the public purse, and for the twelfth time he was thanked by both Houses of Parliament. On achieving the victory of Waterloo, the King of the Netherlands made him Prince of Waterloo, and the Houses of Commons voted him another sum of £200,000, to purchase the estate of Stratfieldsaye, in Hampshire, for a residence. At the coronation of George the Fourth, in 1821, he officiated as Lord High Constable of England, and in 1827 he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British Army.

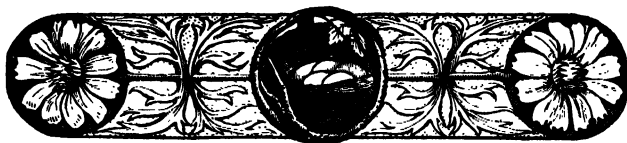
And while he was thus honoured by kings and senates, he was equally popular with the whole nation. The common people almost worshipped him. Statues of him were raised in nearly every large town, and the praises of the "Iron Duke," as he was called, were heard all over the country.

Besides his numerous military posts, the Duke of Wellington held several ministerial offices. He was at one time Prime Minister, and at another Secretary of State

for Foreign Affairs. His talents, however, were better suited to the excitements and emergencies of the tented field than to the intrigues of party or the discussions of the senate. But though in his official and parliamentary life his views did not secure the popular sympathy, he always acted with such strict integrity that his bitterest political enemies—as Tennyson has said—"Blamed the measures, but admired the man."

In 1835 Wellington withdrew from active public life, and his remaining years were spent in a retirement brightened by the friendship of his sovereign and the veneration of his countrymen. He died at Walmer Castle, on the 14th September, 1852, of an epileptic fit. He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral, alongside that other great English soldier, Nelson. He was accorded a public funeral, and, though perhaps the largest, grandest, and most impressive funeral procession the metropolis has ever seen, it was no mere show. In the thousands who followed his honoured dust, and the many more thousands who looked on in decorous silence, there was a large proportion of real mourners—men who felt that one of the great ones of the earth was being carried from their midst.

Wellington's career was marked by few mistakes, and by none of those stains which so frequently sully the reputation of a conqueror. He knew no lust of power or of gain. His ends and aims were his country's, and duty was his law.



## XV.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT BOTANIST.

**T**HE subject of our present sketch, though a foreigner by birth, has attained such a world-wide fame, and has laid our own and other civilized nations under such obligations by his scientific labours, that he may fairly be taken as belonging to science rather than to any particular nationality. There needs, therefore, no apology for admitting him to the companionship of the British “dunces” who have preceded him in these pages.

Our hero was born on the 23rd of May, 1707, at Râshult, in the province of Småland, Sweden, and was in due time baptized by the name of Carl. His father was a country clergyman, but in very humble circumstances, for he was only an assistant to the minister of the parish of Strenbrohult. He seems to have been a man of simple but refined tastes, and he occupied such leisure as his pastoral duties allowed him in the cultivation of his garden, in which he succeeded in growing the most beautiful of the native plants, together with such of the foreign species as were hardy enough to brave the climate.

Of Carl's early boyhood we know but little. From the first he gave evidence of a vigorous constitution, and possessed, among other natural advantages, quickness of sight and a retentive memory—qualifications most essential

for the study of the science which he ultimately made so peculiarly his own. It is said, also, that he seemed to inherit from his father a great interest in plants. He was always willing to hear his father explain the peculiarities and properties of the shrubs and flowers in his well-stocked garden, and there were few even of the rarer sort of which he did not know something besides the mere name. Whether his fondness for the garden prompted him to take a fair share of the less interesting digging, hoeing, and weeding is not recorded; but it is very likely that when his father passed from the theoretical to the practical part of the subject, young Carl would soon find an opportunity of slipping away to join his playfellows on the village green.

Humble as was the position which Carl's father held as a clergyman, he seems to have had a wholesome pride in his profession, and it was early decided that the son should be a clergyman too. What Carl's ideas on the question were we are unable to say, but most likely he was at the time very pleased, as boys usually are, at the idea of succeeding his father. In furtherance of the project for making Carl a minister, the good clergyman made considerable sacrifices to provide for him a suitable education. Accordingly, at the age of ten, he was sent to the Grammar School of Wexio. Here he appears to have enjoyed himself very well for the space of seven years, though he did not distinguish himself as an apt or eager scholar. He slowly crept up through the various classes, and at the age of seventeen he was removed to what was called the "Gymnasium"—a higher seminary connected with the school.

But here, as in the grammar school, he made little progress. In the ordinary studies of the place he was behind his fellows, and nothing his tutors could say or do seemed able to inspire him with ambition or energy. The fact was, all his interest and curiosity were directed to the pursuit of a study which was not included in the theo-

logical course. The curiosity he had evinced respecting the plants in his father's garden, instead of dying away, had greatly increased in intensity, and was now extended in range to the whole vegetable kingdom. He had in one way or another got hold of some ancient books containing pictures and descriptions of plants, and, whenever he could shirk his lessons, he would seat himself in some out-of-the-way corner and read these old books, whose quaint language he could only with great difficulty comprehend.

Nor did he study books only on his favourite science. The fields in the neighbourhood of the Gymnasium were carefully explored for specimens; and, when a half-holiday gave him the opportunity, Carl would make an excursion among the woods and hills which fringe the beautiful Lake Sodre, on whose banks the city of Wexio was built. And for many a long night afterwards the study, classification, and arrangement of the plants so obtained afforded our hero abundant and interesting occupation.

It was usual for the grammar-school students to complete their studies by a stay of three years at the Gymnasium. They were then supposed to be prepared for initiation into the particular profession for which they were intended. Accordingly, when Carl had for two years enjoyed the advantages of this popular academy, his father thought he would go and see how far he had benefited by them. It seems likely that the father hoped to find his son so far advanced as to be able to forego the third year's study without great loss. It was doubtless no light burden for the good clergyman to provide his son with clothing, even if that were the only expense incurred. And as he travelled on towards the cathedral town of Wexio, he probably cheered himself with the thought of the relief it would be if he found Carl qualified to undertake pastoral duty at once.

In due time the old gentleman arrived at the Gymnasium, and introduced himself to the professors. Imagine

his disappointment when he was told that his son Carl, so far from honourably distinguishing himself, had not even kept up with his fellow-pupils, but had neglected his lessons in a most determined manner. The tutors heartily sympathized with the old man in his disappointment, but they felt it their duty to tell him the simple truth about his son. They all agreed that he was utterly unfit for the profession he was intended to follow, and two or three suggested that no further attempt should be made to give the lad a polite education, but that he should at once be apprenticed to some handicraft trade in which classical knowledge was not required.

There was one professor, however, named Rothman, who dissented from the general opinion thus given. He was an eminent physician, and held the office of lecturer on Natural Philosophy at the Gymnasium. Now, though none of the professors could boast of the interest they had awakened in young Carl, yet he had shown a decided preference for the lectures on Natural Philosophy. He generally listened to them with attention, and, when the vegetable kingdom formed the subject of study, the otherwise careless pupil became at once an eager and enthusiastic student.

Professor Rothman had noticed the boy's anxiety for botanical knowledge, and had on several occasions been struck with the progress the youth had already made in the science. And so, when every one was recommending his father to make him a shoemaker or a tailor, he stepped forward and somewhat reconciled the father to his son's backwardness by stating his opinion that though Carl would never make a theologian, he possessed tastes and talents which would most probably enable him to make his mark in another profession—that of physic.

He suggested, therefore, that the year which remained of his course at the Gymnasium should be spent in studying for the medical profession. Carl's father, however, does



not seem to have welcomed the suggestion. Probably the expense was the chief difficulty with him. At any rate, but for Rothman's generosity, and his faith in the lad's ability, it seems certain that Carl would have gone back to the little village of Råshult, destined to earn his bread by some trade.

But rather than the lad should forfeit his present opportunities of study, Rothman offered to take him into his house, free of expense, for the remaining twelve months of his course at the Gymnasium. The arrangement was accepted joyfully by the lad, and gladly, though more soberly, by the old clergyman, who journeyed back to his village parsonage rather more reconciled to his great disappointment.

From this time Carl's tutors seem to have had little cause to complain of his negligence or inattention to study. Now that the school studies and his own inclinations ran together he was diligent enough in his lessons. The kindly professor seems to have taken great interest in him. Besides giving him his board and lodging, which to a well-to-do physician demanded little sacrifice, he gave him what to a busy man means much more—his leisure, spending his evenings in instructing him in physiology. He helped him also in the study of botany, showed him where his own researches were at fault, and drilled him into a systematic study of the science in accordance with the arrangement of the French botanist, Tournefort, which was then considered the best.

Such was his progress during his third year at the Gymnasium that, at the expiration of his time there, it was deemed advisable for him to further prosecute his studies at the famous University of Lund. There he met with another friend in need in the person of Dr. Stobæus, a physician, who possessed a good library and a museum of natural history. With this man he lived, and paid for his board and lodging by rendering various little services. He

made for him a *hortus siccus*, or collection of dried plants, and acted occasionally as his amanuensis and librarian. It is very likely Carl was indebted to his old friend Dr. Rothman's influence for his comfortable quarters at Lund; but if so, that gentleman had deemed it prudent not to inform Dr. Stobœus of Carl's eagerness in the acquisition of botanical knowledge.

The latter gentleman discovered his lodger's abilities and attainments by a mere accident. Carl was in the habit of taking his favourite books to his bedroom when he retired at night, and by the light of a few extra candles, which he procured for the purpose, he often continued his studies far on past midnight—indeed, as long as his candles and his wakefulness held out. Now, Dr. Stobœus was a bachelor, and his domestic arrangements were under the control of his mother, who lived with him. She, good soul, seems to have possessed a full share of that extravagant fear of fires and such-like misfortunes which seems so natural to old ladies. She accordingly thought it her duty to see all the lights in the house extinguished before going to bed. It is very probable our hero had often to resort to harmless deceptions to make his mistress believe he had put out his candle and was safe in bed. But he was not always to be successful in eluding her observation.

One night she noticed the young man's candle burning at what she considered an unseasonably late hour, and next morning she reported the fact to the doctor. He, however, treated the matter lightly, and advised her not to put herself about. But she could no more help putting herself about than Carl could help studying. Her fears were awakened, and, as night after night she saw the light from Carl's bedroom window shining out until the small hours, her dread of calamity increased, and she insisted on her son speaking to the young man about his bad habits.

Accordingly one night, just before retiring to rest, Dr. Stobœus paid a visit to Carl's room, and, to his great sur-

prise, found the young man deeply absorbed in the perusal of a scientific work. He entered into conversation with him, and at once found out, what he now wondered he had not discovered before, that the poor youth he had taken in as an amanuensis was in reality a well-informed student, and that of one subject at least he possessed exceptional knowledge. Under the influence of an impulse, which did the good doctor infinite credit, he cheerfully acknowledged the equality to which the lad's talents raised him, and he accordingly gave him free access to his library, and gave orders that in future Carl should dine with him at his own table.

In the year 1728 our hero spent his vacation at home, and while there had an interview with his old friend, Dr. Rothman. By his advice he resolved to pursue his further studies at the University of Upsal, which promised greater advantages in the study of medicine than that of Lund. But, however great its educational advantages, Carl found there no Dr. Stobæus, and he sorely missed the comfortable home and ample board he had previously enjoyed. His father, who was now convinced that his son would make something out as a doctor, was anxious to do all he could for his son, but his circumstances were such that eight pounds were all he could scrape together towards his expenses; and with this small sum Carl was turned out on the world to make his way as best he could. He tried hard to increase his funds by teaching, but he found great difficulty in procuring pupils willing to pay. His experiences were now of the bitterest kind. His hunger for learning was oftentimes overpowered by the sharper hunger for bread. His clothes were becoming thin and shabby; his boots were worn and broken, and, as he could not afford to have them repaired, he mended them himself as best he could with patches of folded paper. But, as often happens, Carl's darkest hour was just before the dawning of better times. In December, 1728, he won a royal scholarship,

which relieved him from absolute want, and in the next year\*still further good fortune awaited him.

He was one day engaged minutely examining a plant in the college garden, when he was observed by Dr. Olaus Celsius, the Professor of Divinity, who was himself an eminent naturalist. The conversation which followed their meeting convinced the doctor that he had found in Carl the very man he had been looking for. He was engaged on a work illustrating the plants mentioned in the Bible, and he at once arranged with his new acquaintance to assist him. He further befriended him by using his influence to procure him private pupils, and he also introduced him to Rudbeck, the Professor of Botany, who was growing old, and who gladly appointed him as his deputy-lecturer, received him into his house, and gave him free access to his books.

From this time forward Carl's progress was sure and steady. His industry and originality marked him out as a leader of scientific research, and so, on the 12th of May, 1732, he was sent under royal authority, and at the expense of the university, on a visit to Lapland, to study and report upon the plants and flowers of that country. In 1735 he obtained his degree of Doctor of Medicine at Harderwijk, in Holland. The next two years were spent in arranging, on a scientific plan, the garden, museum, and herbarium of a wealthy Dutch banker, who had made botany his hobby.

In 1738 he returned to his native country, and commenced practice as a physician at Stockholm. He was also appointed by Government as public lecturer on botany and mineralogy, at a salary of two hundred ducats a year—about £90 of our money. His position and prospects were now such that he felt at liberty to marry, which he did about Midsummer, 1739. His fame had now spread all over Europe, and Carl von Linné—or, as the name was Latinized, Linnaeus—was in constant communication with the leading scientific men of his day.

In 1740 he was made Professor of Medicine at Upsal University, and then Professor of Botany, and six years later he received the rank and title of Archiater. In 1757 he was raised to the rank of a noble, and a year later was able to purchase estates of the value of £2330.

He died on the 10th of January, 1778, in his seventy-first year, and was buried with great honour in the cathedral at Upsal.

The last eighteen years of his life were spent in the most arduous labour. He had a large practice as a physician, his several professorships demanded much time and study, and these he conscientiously gave. He nevertheless found time to write, on almost every branch of natural history, works which in their day were most popular, and which, notwithstanding the rapid strides of modern scientific speculation and discovery, still possess unmistakable value.

But it is for his researches in botany, and for the services he rendered that science, that he will be chiefly remembered. He found the names, the definitions, and the whole phraseology of the science vague, awkward, and defective. No two botanists were agreed as to the classification of even the simpler plants, and all the systems then known were arranged on a fanciful and uncertain basis. He resolved, therefore, on founding an entirely new botanical system, in which the classification should be effected with reference to the organs of reproduction; and however much the system may have been superseded by those of later botanists, it certainly possesses the merit of clearness of arrangement and simplicity of nomenclature, and was a gigantic improvement on all that had preceded it.

The valuable library and herbarium which Linnæus had formed during his life is now in the possession of the Linnean Society of London, for whom it was bought, on the death of the botanist's son, by Sir J. E. Smith, for the sum of £1000.



## XVI.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT ORATOR.

**I**N the year 1759 there lived in Dorset Street, Dublin, a very talented family. The father was the author of a number of works upon education, and besides having established a great reputation as an actor, he was celebrated as a lecturer on the English language and as a teacher of elocution. The mother was a lady of great ability and refinement, and before her marriage had written several very successful novels and dramas. They had at the time of which we write two sons ; the elder named Charles, and the younger Richard, or, as he was oftener called, Dick—the latter being about seven.

As the father had an enthusiastic regard for the benefits of education, it is no wonder that he early secured for his children the best obtainable. Accordingly, we find them sent to the best school in Dublin, kept by Mr. Samuel Whyte, who about thirty years later had another illustrious pupil in the person of Thomas Moore, the poet.

The boys only stayed under Mr. Whyte's tuition for about a year ; but that was quite long enough to show a decided difference between them. The elder, Charles, made very satisfactory progress in his lessons, and greatly

pleased his father, whose favourite he was. But Dick, though a bright, merry-faced lad, got on so badly that his despairing teacher and his disappointed parent concurred in pronouncing him "a most impenetrable dunce."

In 1762, the family having removed to England, Dick was sent to the public school at Harrow. His brother Charles, as the more promising youth, was kept at home to profit by the special training his father was so well able to give. At Harrow our dunce had every opportunity of distinguishing himself and of obtaining a sound English and classical education. The head-master was Dr. Sumner, a man of the greatest refinement and taste, and among the under-masters was Dr. Parr, almost equally distinguished for his scholarship.

But in spite of these advantages and the healthy emulative spirit which usually pervades a large school, Richard was remarkable only as a very idle, careless lad. In the ordinary business of the school he was behind most of the lads of his age. Some of the boys were very clever writers of Greek, Latin, and English verses; but though Dick read poetry extensively for amusement, he never distinguished himself in its composition. But although he was such an idle young scapegrace, he was an almost universal favourite with masters and boys, notwithstanding that the latter sometimes teased him by calling him "the Player Boy." He is described as a handsome youth, with eyes of a peculiar brilliancy and attraction, and with a geniality and frankness which won all hearts. The teachers, while they blamed his indolence, were fully impressed with the idea that he was no ordinary boy, and an occasional gleam of cleverness made them all the more anxious that he should give his mind to study.

It must not be supposed, however, that our friend Dick was always being punished. Idle as he was, he never got flogged for his neglect. He always contrived to exert himself as much as would just keep him out of disgrace.

He was mischievous enough; but his pranks partook more of the character of practical jokes; and if he transgressed rules, it was in such a frank, open way that the masters could hardly find in their hearts to punish him severely.

Like many another roguish schoolboy, he thought it a good joke to steal from the neighbouring gardens. It was a fact known alike to masters and pupils that Dick had an apple-loft in which he kept enough fruit stored to disorder the stomachs of a dozen hearty boys. This store was replenished on every favourable opportunity by a number of smaller boys whom Dick had enlisted into the service. The under-master, Dr. Parr, one day gave our dunce a lecture about his apple-stealing, and announced his determination to set a watch, and trace the theft, if possible, to him. Dick was not at all alarmed at the threat, but in a good-humoured way defied the teacher to catch him or his accomplices in the act; and the good old doctor years afterwards confessed that he "never could bring the charge home to him."

While Dick was at Harrow his father had become so embarrassed as to be obliged to outrun his creditors. He accordingly went to France with the rest of the family—namely, his wife, his son Charles, and two daughters. There, in September, 1766, at the town of Blois, he had the great misfortune to lose his wife, a lady in whom rare intellectual powers were joined to the most eminent domestic virtue.

Three years later, the affairs of the family had been so far arranged as to allow of their return to England, and so they took up their abode in London, and summoned Dick from school. He was now eighteen years of age; but instead of sending him to college, or deciding on some profession for him, his father kept him and Charles at home. They received instruction in Latin and mathematics from a visiting tutor, and lessons in English grammar and oratory from their father. But, however



much the favourite, Charles, may have profited by his advantages, Dick paid no more attention to his lessons at home than he had done at school.

Indeed, notwithstanding his many advantages, our dunce never became a really correct English scholar. Even after he had become famous, we are told his spelling was faulty in almost every second line he wrote. Among other blunders, it was not unusual to find *think* for *thing*; and *wether*, *were*, and *wich* for *whether*, *where*, and *which*; while single letters nearly always had to do duty for double ones. His acquaintance with the classics was by no means deep, though he made the most of it, and contrived to impress many people with an idea of his erudition. His knowledge of arithmetic, too, was somewhat scanty. It is said that in his early parliamentary career, when he wished to criticize Pitt's financial schemes, he felt it necessary to prepare himself "by three weeks' hard study of arithmetic."

Though our dunce had not distinguished himself in any way at Harrow, and though, so far as the masters know, he had not tried his skill in verse, he was enticed to court the Muses in private, by the example of a fellow-pupil named Halhed. This youth was a far better scholar than Dick, and had established quite a reputation in the school as a writer of poetry. On leaving Harrow, Halhed went to Oxford, and while there he and Dick kept up a correspondence. They also entered into a literary partnership, and, besides a number of other projected works which were never completed, they wrote together a translation from the Greek of Aristænetus. This was published in 1771; but instead of realizing its authors' golden anticipations, it proved a great failure.

We now come to a period in our dunce's history which might furnish romance enough for half a dozen novels. The family had now removed to Bath, the fashionable spa so much frequented by royalty. Dick's father had as yet

proposed no plan for his second son's future. Possibly he did not think such a dunce worth troubling about. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that with nothing particular to do, Dick fell in love. Especially is it not surprising when we consider the many attractions of his fair enchantress.

This was Miss Linley, a very celebrated singer. She was only sixteen, but had already turned the heads of half the *beaux* of Bath by her beauty and her accomplishments. Hers was no mere provincial popularity either. She and her father were engaged for most of the fashionable concerts in London or the provinces.

Dick's family and the Linleys early became acquainted, and of course the two brothers fell in love with Miss Linley. Dick, however, fearing lest the open suit of a ne'er-do-well like himself would be frowned on by the ambitious father, carefully concealed his passion. So well did he succeed in this, that his brother Charles confided to him the secret of his affection, evidently expecting Dick's sympathy and assistance. To make the confusion more confounding, our dunce's bosom friend, Halhed, having heard Miss Linley sing at Oxford, also fell in love with her, and wrote to Dick to tell him he was coming to Bath, and to ask him to arrange for an interview with the lady.

But, notwithstanding all this romance, it was well known that Miss Linley was already betrothed by her father to Mr. Long, a wealthy old gentleman in Wiltshire. She had resolved, however, to break the bonds which bound her to a lover old enough to be her father. She secretly informed Mr. Long that she could never be happy as his wife, but that she dared not disobey her father's wishes. On hearing this, the good old gentleman broke off the engagement, taking all the blame, and when Mr. Linley threatened to sue him for breach of promise, he arranged the matter by settling £3000 upon the girl he had so generously relinquished.

This difficulty out of the way, Dick pressed his suit more eagerly, though still cautiously. His father was away at Dublin, and neither Mr. Linley nor any of the rival suitors suspected the preference Dick had obtained, until their eyes were opened by a most unlooked-for event. Among Miss Linley's many admirers, it was her misfortune to have attracted one of those professional libertines who only glory in their victories over purity and innocence. This vile flatterer—a Mr. Mathews—was at this time persecuting Miss Linley with his villainous addresses. She complained of him to our friend Dick, and in the desperation to which she was brought, she was easily persuaded to seek refuge by flight.

Accordingly, in March, 1772, the pair escaped by way of London to Dunkirk in France, where they stayed for a time with some friends. Miss Linley had left home with the intention of secluding herself in a convent, and sending her lover back to ask her father's pardon. But, as was natural, when Dick found himself and his charming companion safe from any adverse influence, he promptly urged the argument, that after committing herself so far she might as well secure their future happiness by marriage. Accordingly they were secretly married at Lisle, and the lady afterwards took apartments in a convent, purposing to wait there until her husband could afford to claim her as his wife.

Before our friend Dick could start back, however, Miss Linley's father arrived in angry pursuit of the runaways. Of course Dick hinted not a word of their marriage, but pacified the father by explaining the cause of their flight from Bath. Mr. Linley, of course, insisted on his daughter's immediate return to England to carry out her musical engagements, and she consented to do so on his promising that she should be allowed to retire to Lisle when they were fulfilled. This settled, Mr. and Miss Linley and our

friend Dick returned together to Bath, where the escapade had made quite a town's talk.

In consequence of an insulting paragraph in the *Bath Chronicle*, and in accordance with the ridiculous code of honour of that day, Dick fought two duels with Mathews, the *beau* who had driven Miss Linley to France. The second duel arose out of the first, and in it both were rather seriously hurt. Dick had to be carried from the ground, and it was many a weary day before he recovered sufficiently to walk out.

On his return from Dublin, Dick's father was highly incensed at his son's freaks. He had never been fond of him, and from this time indifference turned to positive dislike. Mr. Linley, if only on prudential grounds, took care to keep his daughter out of Dick's way. Indeed, she was watched so closely, that it was seldom she could contrive to send a note of sympathetic inquiry to her wounded and banished husband. She, of course, kept the secret of their marriage, though it was agony to do so when his sufferings in her behalf were the constant subject of gossip.

When somewhat recovered, Dick's father sent him to Waltham Abbey, in Essex, to keep him out of harm's way. But while there Miss Linley was singing in the Oratorios at Covent Garden Theatre, and, as he was so near, Dick often went and paid, like any stranger, for the opportunity of feasting his eyes on the wife he dared not claim. As her father carefully prevented the chance of a private interview, Dick had recourse to stratagem. He occasionally paid the driver of her coach to let him drive her home, and having borrowed his coat, and pulled his hat over his eyes, he was enabled without detection to whisper a word to her as he opened and closed the coach door.

From observations he made, Mr. Linley at last decided no longer to oppose an union which seemed inevitable, and

so on the 13th of April, 1773, Mr. Richard Brinsley Sheridan (that is our old friend Dick in his full title) was for the second time joined in holy matrimony to Miss Elizabeth Linley.

A few weeks before his marriage Dick had entered as a law student at the Middle Temple, but he could not afford to wait for the rewards, however rich, of that profession. A part of the £3000 settled on his wife was all they had to live on, with the exception of occasional help from Mr. Linley. Dick's father had discountenanced him altogether. A large income might have been secured by Mrs. Sheridan's public performances, but her husband had declined to permit her again appearing as a public singer—a resolution which drew forth Dr. Johnson's commendation. It was plain, therefore, that Sheridan must do something. And, strange to say, the dunce, who had never made anything out at school, and who had not distinguished himself since, except as the joint author of an unsuccessful translation, the planner of an elopement, and the fighter of a pair of duels, resolved to get his living by his pen.

He accordingly set to work and wrote the comedy of "The Rivals," which was brought out at Covent Garden in January, 1775. The first night was a failure, but by a change of the players it became on the second performance a grand success, and has ever since been immensely popular. The celebrity which his dramatic success gained him soon opened for our hero and his charming wife the drawing-rooms of nobility and fashion, and Sheridan soon proved himself qualified to shine in the most exalted and brilliant society.

On the 21st of November, 1775, "The Duenna," an opera, of which the words were written by Sheridan and the music by Mr. Linley, was performed at Covent Garden. It has been pronounced by competent critics as the best English opera ever written. In the beginning

of 1776 Sheridan became part proprietor of Drury Lane Theatre; and in May of the next year he produced there a new play—"The School for Scandal"—which took the town by storm, and is perhaps the most popular comedy ever written. In 1778 he purchased another share in the theatre, and wrote another successful drama—"The Critic."

For the last five years he had been gradually making his way in society, climbing round after round of the social ladder. He had now become acquainted with Burke and Fox, was a distinguished visitor at Devonshire House, and had already begun to interest himself in politics. Hence it was that, just as he had achieved a proud position as a dramatist, a new sphere of ambition opened before him.

In 1780 he was returned to Parliament as one of the members for Stafford. For thirty-two years he continued to hold a seat in the House of Commons, and though he did not blindly support the interests of either party, he was generally to be found with Fox and Burke on the side of liberty and patriotism. At first he did not speak much in the House. His powers as an orator were not fully known until, in 1787, he astounded his hearers by his magnificent impeachment of Warren Hastings. The effect of such a combination of wit, logic, eloquence, and passionate feeling was positively overwhelming. Even Sheridan's enemy—Pitt—admitted that this oration "possessed everything that genius or art could furnish to agitate or control the human mind." His reputation was now established, and his eloquence known and feared. He frequently delighted the House by his ready wit and polished speech, or maddened his opponents by his withering irony.

In 1782 he obtained by his influence for his brother Charles the post of Secretary for War in Ireland. It scarcely needs to say that this elder son, of whom the

father thought so much, never displayed a tithe of the talent of Richard Sheridan. Nor did his filial affection burn so warmly as that of this slighted and upbraided brother; for when, in the summer of 1782, the father approached his end it was Richard's hands which performed the last offices of duty and affection. After many overtures of reconciliation, the stern old gentleman had a few years previously coldly consented to meet his son Richard; but he never seems to have taken him to his heart as he did Charles.

Sheridan rapidly grew in political power. He was respected by his party, honoured by the people, and favoured with much notice by the Prince of Wales, with whom he was supposed to exercise great influence. To a superficial observer it might seem that henceforth he need limit his honours and rewards only by his desires; but, in fact, this was but the meridian of a splendour that was soon to fade. The favour of princes brings with it a bondage little short of slavery. Sheridan found himself unable to act without consulting the wishes and opinions of his royal master. True, he might have sold himself really to the service of the Prince of Wales, as he was so popularly supposed to have done, and if he had, unbounded wealth and almost unlimited honours would have been his. But this was the very consideration which caused him to shrink from accepting valuable appointments when offered, lest his enemies should say he had done it at the sacrifice of principle.

He was embarrassed, too, in his private finances. His wife died in 1792, and he plunged into a course of ruinous expenditure and reckless dissipation. He married again, but his affairs got more and more embarrassed. His slovenly way of attending to business made matters worse. He was always putting off the unpleasant scrutiny and the prudent reform which might have saved him from ruin. His theatre was burned down, worse and worse

grew his circumstances, deeper and deeper his dissipation, until he lost his seat in Parliament, and, being no longer secure from arrest, was instantly pounced upon by a swarm of hungry creditors.

Instead of calling in all claims and making some arrangements for their settlement, he foolishly paid all comers as long as he had the means, without even troubling to see if the claim were a rightful one. Illness set in. He was now deserted by the grand and titled friends who had courted and flattered him when his influence was useful. The depth of degradation was one day reached by his being seized and taken to a sponging-house. At last his frame sunk under the combined pressure of disease, despair, and debt, and on the 7th of July, 1816, Richard Brinsley Sheridan died.

As soon as he was dead, and beyond the need of their countenance or their cash, his titled acquaintances became wonderfully solicitous and sympathetic. His funeral was a magnificent one; and as he was borne slowly on towards Westminster Abbey, his corpse was followed by a long procession of royal dukes, marquises, earls, and lords, and by most of the ministers and political leaders.

Together with his many and great faults, Sheridan had many good qualities. He was generous, honourable, and courageous; and his parliamentary career, though perhaps not blameless, was nearly throughout honourable, consistent, and above suspicion. As a dramatist, an orator, and a wit, he was the delight of his own age, and the wonder of succeeding generations.





## XVII.—THE DUNCE WHO BECAME A GREAT ENGINEER.

**A** HUNDRED and thirty years ago there lived in the seaport town of Greenock, in Scotland, a well-to-do citizen, who had realized a considerable fortune by the combined business of builder, ships' chandler, and general merchant. He was a shrewd, enterprising man, and was held in high esteem by his fellow-townsmen, as was evident from the posts of honour and responsibility to which they had called him. He had held for many years the honourable offices of town councillor and treasurer, and was besides a bailie, or magistrate.

It is to this Scotch bailie's house that we must look for the subject of the present sketch in the person of Jamie, the elder of his two sons.

He was born on the 19th of January, 1736. A wonderfully delicate child from his birth, it seemed scarcely possible that he could reach manhood. With careful nursing and judicious management, however, the little fellow struggled through the complaints incident to childhood. But, though spared, he was still weak and delicate, and needed the most constant care and attention.

It was, of course, impossible to send such a boy to take his chance in a public school. He shrank from the rough play and boisterous merriment of strong and healthy lads.

He was accordingly kept at home, and received the rudiments of his education there. His mother taught him to read, and his father instructed him in writing and imparted the elements of arithmetic. As his health prevented his joining in the sports of other boys of his age, our hero's parents were anxious to occupy profitably and pleasantly his leisure hours. His mother encouraged him to learn drawing, and supplied him with copies and colours. His father bought for him a small set of carpenter's tools.

With these substitutes for outdoor games, little Jamie was well content. He would sit for hours sketching and painting, and when tired of that, he would work away with his hammer, chisel, and saw, and take his toys to pieces or make new ones. He was fond, too, of reading, though he displayed a very queer taste in his choice of books. He liked tales and romances, but if a scientific book came in his way, he would be sure to puzzle over it until he knew something of its contents.

But though contented with his indoor amusements, he suffered from the lack of fresh air and exercise. His almost constant confinement to the house had its natural effect on his nervous system. He became preternaturally sensitive, and was subject to violent sick-headaches, which for the time completely prostrated him. As might have been expected, he became somewhat precocious. One or two instances are related in which our hero showed ability beyond his years; but such cases are by no means rare, and they prove nothing more than the precocity of a mind unduly and unequally forced.

As a rule, Jamie was a backward scholar, and impressed most people as a dull, listless, idle boy. One of his aunts—Mrs. Muirheid—an active, energetic Scotchwoman, used frequently to lose her temper with him on account of his idleness. One evening she had been watching our dunce amusing himself in a listless fashion until she could keep silence no longer, and she accordingly rebuked him sharply.

"I never saw such an idle boy as you are; take a book or employ yourself usefully. For the last hour you have not spoken one word, but taken off the lid of that kettle, and put it on again, holding now a cup and now a silver spoon over the steam, catching and counting the drops it falls into."

As "our dunce" grew older his parents were, of course, unable to devote sufficient time to his tuition, and it was at last decided to send him to a commercial school in the town kept by a Mr. McAdams. Here, however, Jamie was quite out of place. He was unable to play, fight, or argue with boys of his own age and size, and, as might be expected, he was ridiculed, persecuted, and domineered over by his schoolfellows. It was a mixed school, and even the girls joined in the laugh against the timid youngster. His life must, therefore, have been decidedly uncomfortable.

And then he shone as little in the class as he did in the playground. He had not sufficient confidence in himself, and was almost as timid before the teacher in school as he was before the less considerate boys outside. He was considered by the schoolmaster as a slow, inapt scholar, and dull and backward for his age. There was one subject, however, in which "our dunce" showed some ability. At fourteen he was put into the mathematical class, in which he at once took a good position, though by no means first even in that.

But though he made such little progress at school, he seems to have read a great deal at home, for about this time we find him developing a great faculty for narrative and romance. He was sent to Glasgow on a visit to some relations, but when he had been there a few weeks, his friends besought his mother to take him home again. Said one, "You must take your son James home. I can no longer bear the state of excitement in which he keeps me; I am worn out with want of sleep. Every evening before

our usual hour of retiring to rest, he adroitly contrives to engage me in conversation, then begins some striking tale, and, whether it be humorous or pathetic, the interest is so overpowering that all the family listen to him with breathless attention; hour after hour strikes unheeded, but the next morning I feel quite exhausted. You must, really, take home your son."

And besides the talent for story-telling, our hero seems to have given other evidences of study. He had made considerable progress in chemistry and natural philosophy. When only about fourteen, he constructed an electrical machine from a small model he had seen, and which proved a great source of amazement and amusement to his friends and neighbours. He had also studied botany and geology, and made no inconsiderable progress in the science of astronomy.

The affliction of his early years had prevented much intimacy with youths of his own age, and he grew up with a disposition for solitary pleasures and pursuits. He seems not even to have associated much with his brother John, a lad only three years younger, although nothing is recorded to show that he regarded him with other than brotherly feelings. When the weather and his health permitted, Jamie rambled alone along the shores of beautiful Loch Lomond, or beside the river Clyde, enjoying with deep delight the varied beauties of the scene, or deeply absorbed in speculations aroused by the botanical and geological developments around him.

On returning home after his visit to Glasgow, our hero was sent to the Greenock Grammar School, and here he seems to have fared better than at Mr. McAdams'. Possibly the probation there had done him good, and made him more robust and confident. He now made fair progress in the rudiments of Latin and Greek, though he was still more successful in mathematics; in fact, he could no longer be called a dunce.

His evenings were now spent in drawing, carving, or working with his tools, which were now greatly increased. Pleased to see the interest Jamie showed in his first set of tools, and the skill with which he used them, the father had bought him a larger and better set. He had also given him a spare room for use as a workshop, and had had a little smithy forge put up, together with bench, vice, and every necessary for blacksmith's or carpenter's work. Living in a seaport town, our hero's mind was naturally directed to such appliances as were used on the quays, and he accordingly occupied his leisure in making miniature cranes, pulleys, pumps, and capstans.

He was much interested in inspecting the compasses, quadrants, and other nautical instruments which his father had for sale, and which were sometimes left by the ships' captains for repairs. The interest thus excited determined the choice of his future career. His brother John had already resolved to follow his father's business, and as that left Jamie free to choose his, he quickly decided to learn the trade of a mathematical instrument maker.

Such a trade was by no means common in Scotland, and it was a long time before a man could be found to whom he could be apprenticed. At length our hero was sent in his sixteenth year to learn his chosen trade with a man at Glasgow. He found, however, that his master was quite unable to teach him the business. He called himself an optician, but was really a Jack-of-all-trades. He was "by turns a whitesmith and a cutler, a repairer of fiddles, and a tuner of spinnets." Not more than once a month was a mathematical instrument to be seen in his shop, and even then they were only brought for repairs.

Jamie remained with the Glasgow "optician" for a little over two years, and then his indentures were cancelled, and he set out for London on horseback. With great difficulty he there got admitted to the shop of one of the first men in the trade—Mr. John Morgan, Mathemati-

cal and Nautical Instrument Maker, Finch Lane, Cornhill. His health, however, gave way in consequence of confinement. He was in the shop all day, and at night he dared not venture into the streets, for fear of being seized by the press-gang and sent to sea.

After about a year with Mr. Morgan, our hero returned to Scotland a clever and efficient workman, intending to set up as a mathematical instrument maker in Glasgow. But new difficulties awaited him. He was not a burgess of the city, and so the ancient Corporation of Arts and Trades would not allow him to set up shop. All endeavours to conciliate the ancient guild having failed, it seemed as if our hero would have to retire to Greenock; but just then the officials of the Glasgow University, admiring his pluck and ability, interfered in his behalf.

The Corporation of Arts and Trades had no jurisdiction within the university bounds, so the university granted our hero the use of a part of their premises for a workshop, and honoured him by a title. So our friend Jamie did set up in the town notwithstanding all opposition, his full rank and title being "James Watt, Mathematical Instrument Maker to the University of Glasgow." He occupied his rooms at the university for about six years, and there are still in existence instruments made by him at this time, which are marvels of neatness and accuracy.

Our friend Jamie was now very far from being a dunce. The professors and students of the university soon found that he was no mere handicraftsman. They discovered that he was wonderfully well informed on many branches of scientific study, and that he brought to the consideration of every subject a calm, well-disciplined, and philosophic mind. The shop in which he worked became a meeting-place for all the more thoughtful students, and when the labours of the day were over, James Watt was always ready to discuss any subject which might present itself, however difficult or abstruse.

When not so engaged, his evenings were occupied with studies of the deepest and most varied character. •He allowed nothing to stand in the way of his investigation of a subject. On one occasion he wanted to refer to a German scientific work, and though he might doubtless have borrowed the help of a translator, he determined not to get his information second-hand, and therefore sat down and learned German. For a similar reason he mastered the Italian language. He occasionally entered on what seemed perfectly hopeless undertakings. For instance, although he was perfectly insensible to the charms of music, and could scarcely tell one note from another, he nevertheless undertook to build an organ; and what is more surprising, he succeeded in producing an instrument, not only complete in every mechanical contrivance—that we should expect—but perfect in tone, and remarkable for the harmony of its combinations.

It was about the year 1762, and while still occupying his apartments at the university, that his attention was directed to the study of the steam-engine. There was in the university a model of Newcomen's engine, which would not work. Our hero was asked to examine it, and put the machine in order. The engine was very quickly put right, but the ideas it suggested in the mind of Watt were destined to occupy him for many years to come.

The only use of steam in the Newcomen engine was to create a vacuum, into which a piston was forced by atmospheric pressure, to be raised again by a counterpoise, thus communicating an alternate motion to a lever or beam. The cylinder, after being heated by the steam, had to be cooled at every stroke by an injection of cold water. Watt saw that by this method much power was lost and much steam wasted. With his characteristic thoroughness, he commenced the study of the nature and properties of steam preparatory to attempting an improvement of the engine.

His investigations led to a number of careful and minute calculations and experiments. He discovered the relative proportions of water and steam, decided the amount of heat required to convert a certain weight of water into steam, and estimated the power or lifting force of the latter. He next set about finding a means of creating a vacuum without cooling the cylinder. As the result of a long series of progressive improvements, he adopted the plan of condensation in a separate vessel. Connected with this improvement were the important, though subordinate, inventions of a closed cylinder in place of one open at the top, the attainment of a double action by allowing the steam to enter the cylinder alternately above and below the piston, and the regulation of the speed by the application of "governors" working by centrifugal force.

In this brief sketch it is impossible to give with more detail the improvements effected by Watt in the steam-engine, but enough has been said to show that, with its modifications, the steam-engine was utterly different from the apparatus invented by Newcomen in 1725, and that our hero owed to his predecessors nothing but the suggestion of the piston and cylinder.

In the year 1764 Watt married his cousin, Miss Millar; and, as she was the daughter of a burgess, he was now free to establish himself in the town. He accordingly opened a shop in the Salt Market. In addition to his trade of mathematical instrument maker, he now practised land surveying, and shortly afterwards adopted the profession of civil engineer. Amid these varied employments he was, however, still studying and improving his engine.

Strange to say, though most of Watt's improvements of the steam-engine were made in 1765, nearly three years passed before he found any one able and willing to share in further experiments and in the ultimate manufacture of his engine. By most of his scientific friends the value



of his inventions was duly appreciated; but so difficult is it to obtain public recognition of new and startling ideas, that it was only in 1768 that he found a capitalist willing to join him in his enterprise. His partner was Dr. John Roebuck, the founder of the celebrated Carron Ironworks. By the assistance he brought, Watt was enabled to complete an engine embodying all his modifications, and for this he took out a patent in January, 1769.

But in that year Dr. Roebuck became involved in embarrassing speculations, the steam-engine had to be laid aside, and Watt was obliged to return to his ordinary employment. In 1773 Watt was deeply stricken by the loss of his dear wife, and Matthew Boulton, the founder of the world-renowned establishment at Soho, near Birmingham, invited him to come and join him, and forget his great sorrow in the congenial occupation of perfecting and producing the steam-engine. Watt consented, Dr. Roebuck gave up his share in the patent, and thus was formed the celebrated firm of Boulton and Watt, whose engines in a few years were to be seen in almost every manufacturing town in the kingdom.

This partnership existed for twenty-six years, during which time the steam-engine was continually improved by successive inventions by Watt. In 1800 he retired from business, and devoted himself to literature and science. He died on the 25th of August, 1819, at the ripe age of eighty-three—the delicate child having lived to see a hale old age.

The vast importance of Watt's improvements to the steam-engine has a natural tendency to throw into the shade his other inventions and attainments, and few people are aware of the wonderful extent of his knowledge, or the gigantic power of his mind. He it was who discovered that water—until his day believed to be a simple element—was a compound of two gases, oxygen and hydrogen. It is to him we owe the copying-machine,

that little apparatus now found in every office, and by which *facsimile* copies of documents are produced. He was the first to use steam as a means of heating apartments. He also introduced into this country the French chemist's—Berthollet's—method of bleaching by the use of chlorine; and at the time of his death he was engaged on a machine for copying sculpture. He had already succeeded in producing several specimens, which he presented to his friends as "the first attempts of a young artist entering on his eighty-third year."

Those who knew him, however, say that his mechanical knowledge was by no means more remarkable than his attainments in abstruse sciences, or his acquaintance with general literature. Lord Jeffery says of him, "Perhaps no individual in his age possessed so much and such varied and exact information, had read so much or remembered what he had read so accurately and well. . . . It seemed as if every subject that was casually started in conversation with him had been that which he had been last occupied in study and exhausting. . . . Nor was this promptitude and compass of knowledge confined in any degree to the studies connected with his ordinary pursuits. . . . It probably is not generally known, that he was curiously learned in many branches of antiquity, metaphysics, medicine, and etymology, and perfectly at home in all the details of architecture, music, and law."

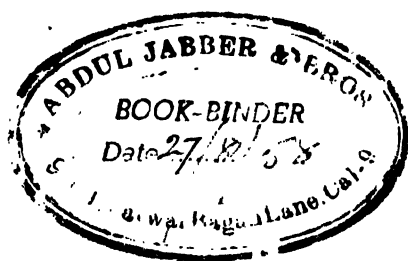
Watt became a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1784, of the Royal Society of London in 1788, a Member of the Batavian Society in 1787, and a correspondent of the French Institute in 1808. In 1806 the University of Glasgow conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, and in 1814 the French Academy of Sciences paid him the highest honour which it could bestow—it nominated him one of its Eight Foreign Associates.

He was buried in the parish church of Handsworth,

near Birmingham, and his son erected to his memory an elegant chapel, which contains his statue in marble by Chantrey, the celebrated sculptor. Another marble statue by the same artist has been placed in one of the halls of the Glasgow University—the university which sheltered and patronized him when as yet unknown to fame. A third statue—a massive bronze one—stands in George Square, Glasgow; a fourth is erected in his native town of Greenock; a fifth, by Munro, stands near the Town Hall in Birmingham, the town so intimately associated with his successful enterprise; and lastly, a magnificent marble statue, also by Chantrey, with an inscription by Lord Brougham, has been erected by public subscription in Westminster Abbey.

THE END.







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